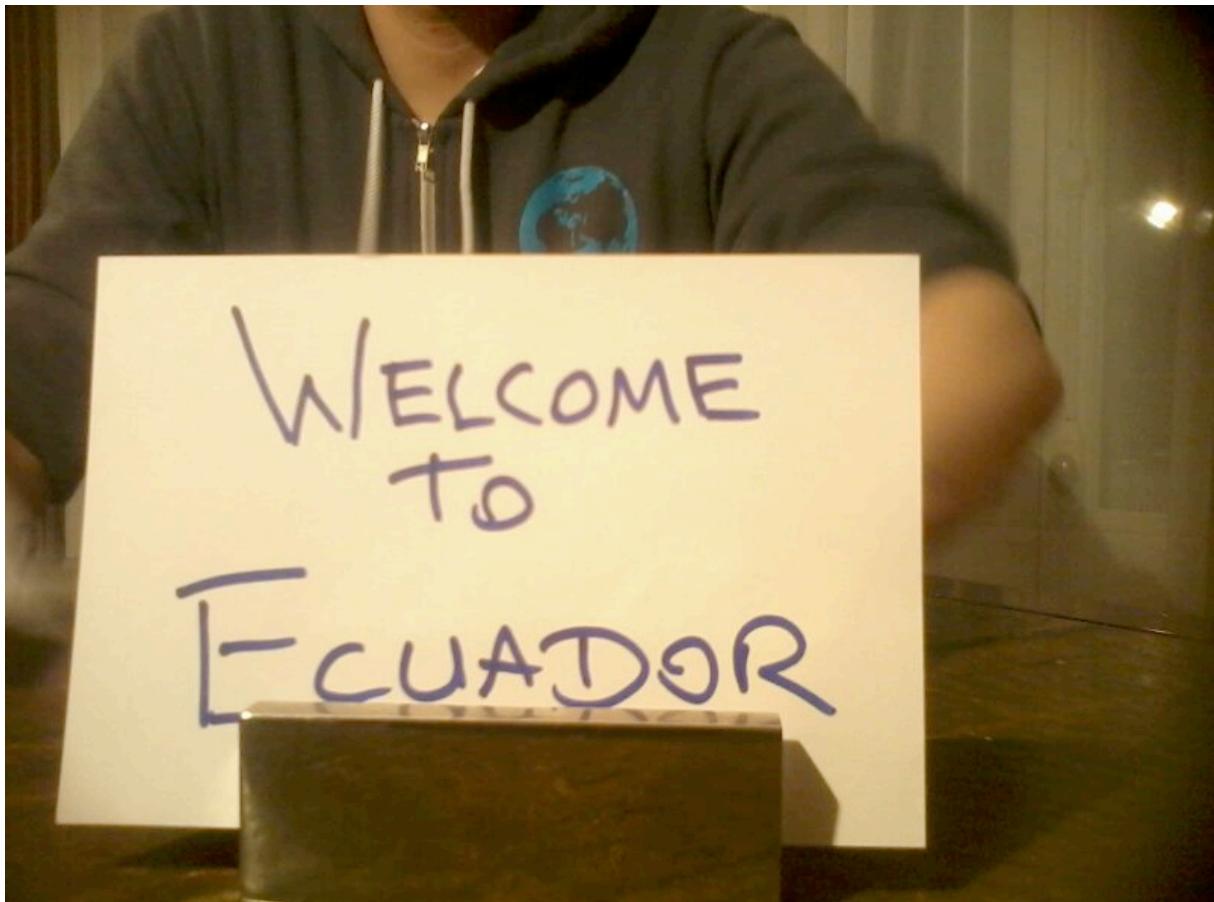


Zoo galerie, Nantes (F)

!Mediengruppe Bitnik



featuring Adam Harvey

25.06_29.10.2016

Curated by Aude Launay

!Mediengruppe Bitnik

Welcome to Ecuador

Since it is now proven¹ that we are curbing our online lives, because we have thoroughly taken onboard the fact that our digital gestures are under constant surveillance, the following issue obviously rears its head: what is the future of knowledge in a society whose members censure themselves and prefer watching kittens videos and having sexy conversations with chatbots?² [Who are we when we know we're being watched? Are we the person we profoundly are, or the person we prefer people to think we are? There are some who unhesitatingly argue that we would be more honest if we addressed a robot.]³

Remote control of populations by intimidation: needless to say, the principle is not a new one, calling to mind certain totalitarian forms of social organization, although here the procedure works in a negative way: it is not so much thought that is being dictated as information that is being disguised.

When Julian Assange founded WikiLeaks in 2006, his intent was to publish information to explain how the world really works,⁴ persuaded as he was that "with some clever mathematics you can [...] enable any individual to say no to the most powerful state."⁵ *Publish or Perish*,⁶ as he summed this up. It was with the online release of the famous video of an American air raid on Baghdad, showing civilians, and in particular two Reuters photographers, being openly mown down in a street, that the website acquired a worldwide audience. The year was 2010. The subsequent sequence of events is well-known: the demand for Assange's extradition made by Sweden, based on a private matter, whose repercussions could well include his incarceration in the United States, just like the whistleblower, Chelsea Manning, who copped a 35-year sentence in a military prison.

On 19 June 2012, Julian Assange entered the Ecuadorean embassy in London, from which he has not since emerged. Six months later, pursuing the idea of breaking down the physical barrier around the embassy created by not only diplomatic guards but also large numbers of policemen, activists, journalists and curious bystanders, !Mediengruppe Bitnik sent a package to Julian Assange. A somewhat special package fitted with a telephone in GPS mode with its camera programmed to take a photo every ten seconds and instantly upload it on Twitter. Several batteries were hooked up to the parcel to make sure there would be live follow-up throughout its London journey from the humble post office in Hackney, to the embassy in posh Belgravia. This third-millennium Mail Art performance took 36 hours, a day and a half during which a certain number of followers were on tenterhooks, as were ordinary BBC TV viewers, watching the whole thing live. For those who were not glued to their screens on 16 and 17 January 2013, the resulting video will serve as a way of catching up. *Delivery for Mr. Assange*, an assemblage of photos taken by the "postdrone" punctuated by documentary tweets, shatters the usual continuity of time while at the same time giving rise to breathless fascination.

After physically visiting Julian Assange on several occasions, and in the wake of a project involving him as well (*Delivery for Mr. Rajab*,⁷ 2013), the Zurich-based twosome decided to issue an identical 1:1 reproduction of the now famous office which will soon have been Assange's 'home' in the Ecuadorean embassy for four years. If he leaves his refuge for any reason whatsoever, he will be instantly arrested by the British police ringing the embassy, but he is also barred from openly showing his lodgings, for obvious security reasons.

This replica is thus made from memory by the artists, there being a ban on taking photos inside the embassy. So today !Mediengruppe Bitnik is inviting you to enter the closed world which Julian Assange has been living in for these past four years of "voluntary" reclusion. As an embodiment of the WikiLeaks nerve centre, this space, which has no outside and is intentionally presented as a set, helps us to experience the confinement of the most famous of hacktivists. At first glance, *Assange's Room* is obviously an egregiously political project, but not least because of the thoughts about space which it prompts: what is signified by the inclusion of one space within another? Is it possible to reproduce a spatial sensation?⁸ This small office which has aroused a great deal of curiosity among public and media alike turns this curiosity as the counterpart of our rulers' curiosity about us, which manifests itself by their ubiquitous surveillance both of our doings and gestures, and of our words said and written. This small office has been, since 19 June 2012, a symbol of the fact that impeding the freedom to come and go will never interfere with the freedom to let the truth come out.

¹ "Jonathon Penney, a PhD candidate at Oxford, analyzed Wikipedia traffic in the months before and after the NSA's spying became big news in 2013. Penney found a 20% decline in page views on Wikipedia articles related to terrorism, including those that mentioned 'al-Qaeda', 'car bomb' or 'Taliban'". <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/work/wp/2016/04/27/new-study-snowdens-disclosures-about-nsa-spying-had-a-scary-effect-on-free-speech/>

² *Is anyone home lol*, the latest !Mediengruppe Bitnik project to date at the Kunsthaus Langenthal (Switzerland) from 28 April to 26 June 2016, presents chatbots from an online dating website which uses them to make up female user profiles. During the disclosure of the Ashley Madison fiasco, it was revealed that the site, which attracts very few real female users, "employed" some 70,000 robots who sent more than 20 million emails to its male users. This is a site which still announces frightening user figures, even after the scandal.

³ During *Theorizing the Web*, Museum of the Moving Image, Queens, New York, 15 April 2016, Judith Donath observed: "When we know it's a machine, we're not trying to make a good impression on it. People tend to be more honest to bots".

^{4,5,6} Hans Ulrich Obrist "In conversation with Julian Assange" (2011), in e-flux journal, *The Internet Does Not Exist*, Sternberg Press, 2015, p. 209-218-217.

⁷ When Julian Assange had received his package, !Mediengruppe Bitnik offered him to send one to a person in a similar situation. Assange decided to dedicate his parcel to the human rights activist Nabeel Rajab, at that time in a maximum security prison in Bahrain.

⁸ We'll think of the virtual reality app launched by *the Guardian* last April which places the viewer inside a US solitary confinement prison cell. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2016/apr/27/6x9-a-virtual-experience-of-solitary-confinement>

It is estimated that between 80,000 and 100,000 people are locked in solitary confinement in the United States.

Chelsea Manning spent 9 months in one of those.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/commentisfree/2016/may/02/solitary-confinement-is-solitary-confinement-is-torture-6x9-cells-chelsea-manning-no-touch-torture-and-it-must-be-abolished>

The show will feature works from the *Delivery for Mr. Assange* series:

Delivery for Mr. Assange (2 channel video installation) and *Julian Assange's Room* (installation)

by !Mediengruppe Bitnik



[Exhibition views at Helmaus, Zurich, February-April 2014. Photos: Mancia/Bodmer, FBMstudio]

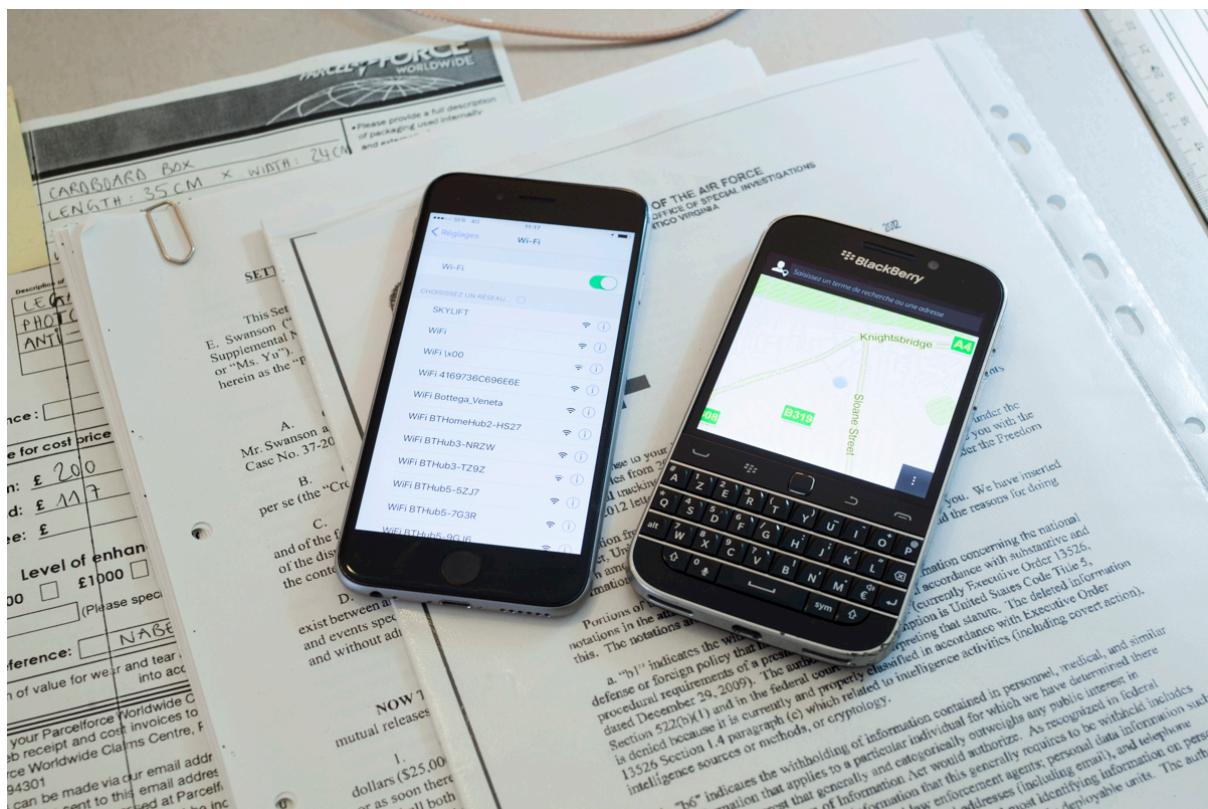
and a new work specially conceived for the occasion by Adam Harvey:

SKYLIFT is a geolocation emulator that virtually relocates visitors to Julian Assange's real residence at the Ecuadorian Embassy in London. The device works by broadcasting WiFi signals that exploit a smartphone's reliance on using nearby MAC addresses for location services.

Once engaged with *SKYLIFT*, the visitors' smartphone's new approximate location will be 3 Hans Crescent Knightsbridge, London SW1X 0LS (The [Ecuadorian Embassy](#) in London). There, they can check-in or share photos that will be tagged with latitude and longitude of the Ecuadorian Embassy in London.

The WiFi data used for *SKYLIFT* was collected onsite in London with a WiFi scanning device. The information displayed on the computer's screen shows the unique MAC addresses and their associated network from routers nearby the embassy. This information is rebroadcast inside the exhibition space to emulate over 60 WiFi access points that exist near the real Ecuadorian Embassy in London.

(more info on Adam Harvey on pages 29 to 43 of the present document)



!Mediengruppe Bitnik

www.bitnik.org

Carmen Weisskopf, 1976, Switzerland
Domagoj Smoljo, 1979, Croatia

!Mediengruppe Bitnik (read - the not mediengruppe bitnik) live and work in Zurich/London. They are contemporary artists working on and with the Internet. Their practice expands from the digital to affect physical spaces, often intentionally applying loss of control to challenge established structures and mechanisms. !Mediengruppe Bitniks works formulate fundamental questions concerning contemporary issues.

In early 2013 !Mediengruppe Bitnik sent a parcel to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange at the Ecuadorian embassy. The parcel contained a camera which broadcast its journey through the postal system live on the internet. They describe «Delivery for Mr. Assange» as a SYSTEM_TEST and a Live Mail Art Piece. They have also been known for sending a bot called «Random Darknet Shopper» on a three-month shopping spree in the Darknets where it randomly bought objects like Ecstasy and had them sent directly to the gallery space.

!Mediengruppe Bitnik are the artists Carmen Weisskopf and Domagoj Smoljo. Their accomplices are the London filmmaker and researcher Adnan Hadzi and the reporter Daniel Ryser.

Their works have been shown internationally including:

Shanghai Minsheng 21st Century Museum, City Art Gallery Ljubljana, Kunsthaus Zürich, NiMk Amsterdam, Space Gallery London, Cabaret Voltaire Zurich, Beton7 Athens, Museum Folkwang Essen, Contemporary Art Center Vilnius, La Gaîté Lyrique Paris, Gallery EDEN 343 São Paulo and the Roaming Biennale Teheran.

They have presented their works in lectures, panels and events including:
ICA London, CCCB Barcelona, HOPE New York, Lentos Museum Linz, Kunsthalle Zurich, Videonale Bonn and FILE Sao Paulo.

They have received awards including:
Swiss Art Award, Migros New Media Jubilee Award, Golden Cube Dokfest Kassel, Honorary Mention Prix Ars Electronica.

Recent works



On top: **Solve this captcha : Is anybody home lol**, 2016. Neon. Kunsthause Langenthal. Photo: Martina Flury Witschi.

Below : **Ashley Madison Angel at Work**, 2016, Kunsthause Langenthal. Photo: Martina Flury Witschi.



On top : ***Chelsea's Wall*** - @xychelsea tweets projected onto city walls. Images from Ljubljana.
Aksioma – Institute for Contemporary Art, Ljubljana, 2016.

Below: **H333333K**, 2015. 23 x 4.3 m. House of Electronic Arts Basel, Switzerland.
Mediengruppe Bitnik translate a digital image error, a glitch,
onto the façade of the House of Electronic Arts Basel (HeK).
Applied directly onto the architecture of the building,
the glitch misaligns the elements of the façade,
bringing disturbance to an otherwise settled structure.



16 x Round Security Holographic Sticker
Last item for Ljubljana Edition. Replacement stickers to reseal opened products.

***Random Darknet Shopper*, 2014-ongoing.**

The Random Darknet Shopper is an automated online shopping bot provided with a budget of \$100 in Bitcoins per week. Once a week the bot goes shopping in the deep web where it randomly chooses and purchases one item and has it mailed directly to the exhibition space. Once the items arrive they are unpacked and displayed, each new object adding to a landscape of traded goods from the Darknet.

Ljubljana Edition: Aksioma Institute for Contemporary Art, 24 Feb – 25 Mar 2016
London Edition: Horatio Junior Gallery, London, Dec 11 2015 - Feb 5 2016
St. Gallen Edition: Kunst Halle St. Gallen, Switzerland, Oct 14 2014 - Jan 15 2015





Random Darknet Shopper, 2014-ongoing.

[Previous page]

[Hungary HQ Passport Scan](#)
As a last item in this series, Random Darknet Shopper bought a passport scan for 25 USD.

[Sprite Stash Can](#)
Random Darknet Shopper bought a stash can for 0.05930238 BTC

[Baseball Cap with Spy Camera](#)
Random Darknet Shopper bought spy gear for 0.25974025 BTC

[This page]

[Fire brigade masterkeys set](#)
Random Darknet Shopper bought this masterkey set from the UK for 50\$

[View of the exhibition in St Gallen.](#)

!Mediengruppe Bitnik

Press clips from

Vice [En]

BBC [En]

Die Zeit [Ge]

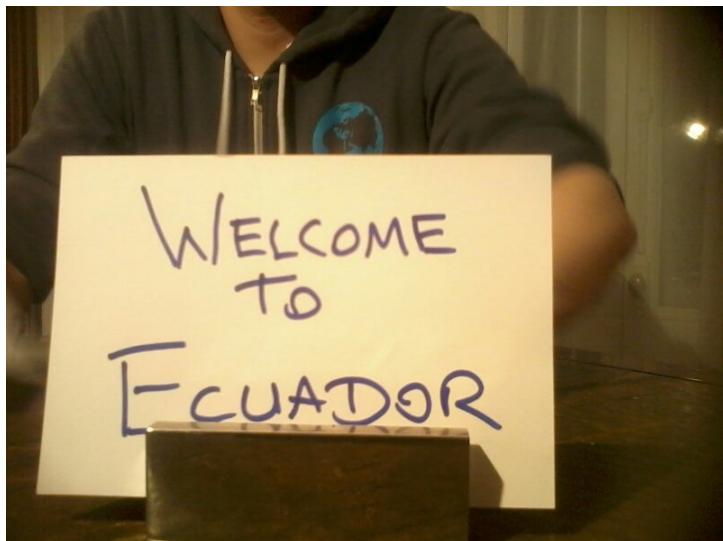
O2 [Fr+En]

Libération [Fr]



I Sent a Camera to Julian Assange's Embassy Hideout

January 23, 2013
By Helena Williams



Do you keep yourself up at night – sweat pooling around you, your eyeballs pulsating – wondering what it would feel like to be packed up into a cardboard box and mailed to Julian Assange? Well, [!Mediengruppe Bitnik](#) – a group of Swiss artists – have kindly done everything they can to cure your insomnia by sending a parcel from Hackney to the Ecuadorian embassy (where Assange has been holed up for the past seven months), fitted with a camera that took a photo every ten seconds and automatically uploaded it to their [Twitter feed](#). Besides being a goldmine of images for anyone who's ever wanted to track a Royal Mail delivery every step of the way, the "Delivery for Mr Assange" project also gave us a glimpse into how the Carey Mulligan doppelganger of the whistle-blower world has been living during his time as a house-guest of the Ecuadorians. He doesn't do many interviews – probably something to do with the fact that he'll be arrested and extradited to Sweden as soon as he steps out of the door – so going through the keyhole into his beige world of WikiLeaks hoodies and posters of large wild cats was kind of exciting.

Following the live feed, however, was not. There was a lot of waiting, a lot of black, [a leg](#) or two and all the other tedious stuff you might expect from studying two days worth of photos from the inside of a box. Then, finally, a picture of Julian's smiling face appeared – something I didn't imagine I'd ever be so ecstatic to see. I spoke to Carmen Weisskopf, one of the founders of !Mediengruppe Bitnik, to find out why they sent their package to Julian Assange.



He's a pretty controversial figure.

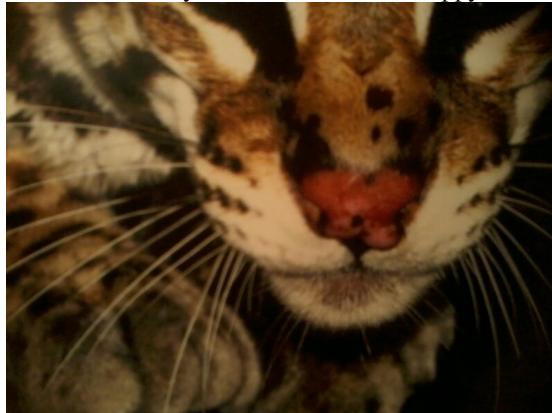
Yeah, his allegations are severe. I think that he's on the forefront of debate between open and closed systems, and it's important not to forget that he stands for something important. People might not like him on a personal level, but it's unfair for them to discredit his fights.

Did you expect him to write about Bradley Manning, Aaron Swartz and all the other stuff he put on the cards?

No, we were really surprised. We just asked him to show us a view from the embassy, which he might not have got permission for. We felt really honoured that he apparently took time to think about what he'd do with the camera when it arrived. And he obviously found a way to perform in front of the camera in a way that suited him. We expected him to use the stage for political messages because he's an activist, but I feel like he did it in a very personal way, especially with the wild cats.

Yeah, what were the cats about?

We couldn't really tell, but it made me happy to see them.



The whole thing got a lot of attention.

We never expected that, either. We were really happy because it became quite clear that people wanted to follow this thing, thinking, 'I've been staring at this live image for 12 hours and I don't know why.' There was something really fascinating and enticing, but they couldn't define what it was exactly.

Are you hackers?

No, not at all. We've tried to take hacking out of the computer and into culture. I don't think Anonymous would be interested in talking to us in that sense. But we try to take the same thinking and apply it to other systems on a conceptual level.

WikiLeaks tweeted you when the parcel was being delivered. Were they supportive?

We didn't really talk to each other beforehand. They did warn Assange that there was a package and they wanted him to be able to follow it. We hoped they'd be able to understand the work, but we're not sure they did beforehand.

That's a shame. What does the "bitnik" in your group's name mean?

We like the "nick" on the end because it's sort of futuristic but from the 70s – the future that's somehow in the past. The "bit" comes from one of the smallest entities in a computer – the bits and bytes. A lot of people think it comes from the beatniks – that group of writers in the 50s – but no, we don't take that many drugs.

What's the reasoning behind the project?

It's questioning how much transparency we have in a working democratic society, who controls which information, who has access to which information. We'd love to understand what's going on in this world.

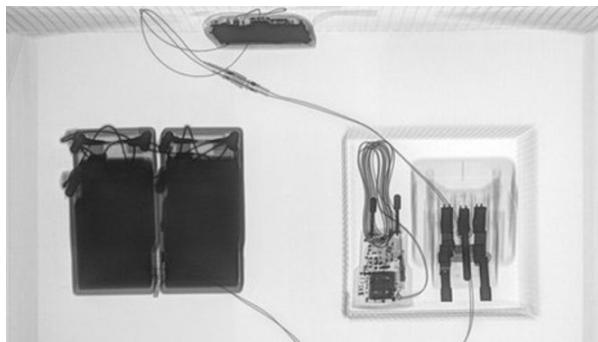
Thanks, Carmen.

Parcel for Julian Assange is geo-tracked by artists

By Dave Lee Technology reporter, BBC News

17 January 2013

From the section [Technology](#)



An X-ray image of the parcel the artists sent to Julian Assange

Two Swiss artists have used GPS tracking and live webcam to follow the progress of a parcel intended to reach WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange.

Domagoj Smoljo and Carmen Weisskopf have [posted updates on the parcel's progress online](#).

At the time of writing, the parcel had reached the embassy and appeared to be being checked over by security. For the past seven months Mr Assange has taken refuge at the Ecuadorian embassy in London.

He faces extradition to Sweden over sexual assault claims, which he denies.

We wanted to visualise the invisible journey a parcel takes through the postal system Carmen Weisskopf, Artist

The artists posted the parcel at a post office in east London on Wednesday at 12:43 GMT. Later, they emailed Mr Assange to explain the project.

"The parcel is a live mail art piece. It is intended as REAL_WORLD_PING, a SYSTEM_TEST inserted into a highly tense diplomatic crisis," the email read, making reference to program code functions.

"Since you took refuge there in June last year, the Ecuadorian embassy in London has been the spectacular staging of an intense clash between the international order and freedom of information activists."

"We want to see where the parcel will end. Which route it takes and whether it reaches you."

The artists requested that Mr Assange use the camera to "show us your view of the diplomatic crisis unfolding outside the embassy".

When finished, Mr Assange has been encouraged to send the camera on to another person of his choosing.

Prior to its arrival, the package broadcast pictures of its position within a Royal Mail sorting office - before being put into the back of a van and taken across the city.



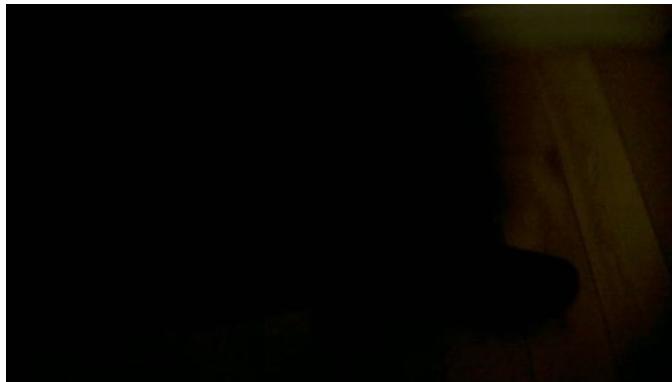
The GPS locator tracked the parcel as getting to Mr Assange via the South London Mail Centre



Sorting office staff are seen in some pictures.
The Royal Mail said it had no comment to make on the project.



The parcel spent almost an hour outside the embassy on Hans Crescent.



The first glimpse inside the embassy as a member of staff appears to carry the parcel

Artist Ms Weisskopf told the BBC that they did not know what to expect when they sent the parcel. "We were actually expecting everything, from the parcel not being accepted to it being taken out of the system and destroyed," she said. Explaining the motivation behind the project, she added: "We like to experiment with technological systems and see how far we can take them. We wanted to visualise the invisible journey a parcel takes through the postal system." Sorting office staff can be seen in some of the photographs taken. The Royal Mail told the BBC it had no comment on the project - or whether it would encourage similar tracking or broadcasting of parcels.

Wenn der Postmann plötzlich klingelt

Die Schweizer Künstlergruppe Bitnik schickt Julian Assange ein Paket – und fragt, wie viel Utopie noch im Internet steckt **VON CASPAR SHALLER**

Hab leere Whiskeyflaschen, aufgetürmte Akten auf einem Sitzungstisch, ein Laufband, Festplatten, Kabelgewirr – wer dieses Chaos sieht, ahnt nicht, dass hier die Frontlinie eines unsichtbaren Krieges verläuft. Sie verläuft gleich hinter Harrods in London, wo WikiLeaks-Gründer Julian Assange seit über einem Jahr in der ecuadorianischen Botschaft ausharrt, argwöhnisch bewacht und umstellt von der britischen Polizei. Diese Front verläuft jetzt allerdings auch im Zürcher Helmhaus. Dort hat die Mediengruppe Bitnik um die Schweizer Künstler Domagoj Smoljo und Carmen Weisskopf für ihre Ausstellung *Delivery for Mr. Assange* Julian Assanges Arbeitszimmer präzise nachgebaut. Er ist beklemmend, dieser 20 Quadratmeter kleine

auch ein veralteter Wert: das Postgeheimnis. Ein solch geschütztes Recht gibt es bei allen anderen Kommunikationsmitteln nicht mehr, das wissen wir spätestens seit Edward Snowdens Enthüllungen über die Machenschaften der NSA. Doch auch das Postgeheimnis musste erst erstritten werden. Dass E-Mails und Skype-Gespräche nicht physisch erfahrbar sind, heißt nicht, dass sie nicht auch denselben Schutz genießen könnten wie ein Paket.

Und diese Box reist weiter um die Welt, das Projekt wächst: Der nächste Empfänger des Pakets wurde von Julian Assange ausgesucht, es war der in Bahrain inhaftierte Menschenrechtsaktivist Nabeel Rajab. Das Paket ging verloren, ein zweiter Versuch soll folgen, hoffentlich endet er nicht auch im Zoll in Dubai. »In der Firewall«, sagt Weisskopf und lässt einmal mehr die analoge und die digitale Welt ver-

([zoom in](#))

DIE ZEIT, (Ipad URL), 27.3.2014

!Mediengruppe Bitnik

Ce que l'Internet peut faire à l'art, et inversement, en tout cas semble-t-il

par Aude Launay

«The Darknet – From Memes to Onionland. An Exploration»
Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen, 18.10.2014–11.01.2015.
Avec: !Mediengruppe Bitnik, Anonymous, Cory Arcangel, Aram Bartholl, Heath Bunting, Simon Denny, Eva and Franco Mattes, Seth Price, Robert Sakrowski, Hito Steyerl, Valentina Tanni.

La conceptualisation du temps n'a cessé d'évoluer au fil du temps. S'il y a bien là un argument circulaire, il n'en est pas moins vrai que l'on pourrait aisément en retracer l'histoire, dans celle de la pensée comme dans celle des arts. Tandis que le temps de l'homme — intuitif, phénoménologique — et le temps de la science — nécessaire, relatif ou même inexistant — continuent de coexister, il semble que l'on puisse affirmer que la perception qui en prévaut aujourd'hui est celle qui ressort de l'instantanéité, alors que, parallèlement, nous avons du monde qui nous entoure une perception de moins en moins directe, de plus en plus médiée. C'est donc une immédiateté temporelle mais non physique qui est désormais le plus à même de définir notre rapport aux mondes. En effet, au vu des quelque dix milliards de photos prises chaque mois rien que par les Américains — à tel point que l'idée d'un *Photo Free Day* a même été lancée le 3 février dernier¹ — l'on en vient à se poser nombre de questions: que regarde-t-on réellement? Prendre une photo pour la regarder plus tard est-ce une manière de mieux voir ou de moins voir? Sommes-nous encore capables de regarder le monde une journée entière avec nos seuls yeux, sans le secours d'un captivant rectangle lumineux sur lequel scroller et scroller encore? Sommes-nous capables d'apprécier notre repas sans en partager la vue avec nos centaines d'amis sociaux? De nous pâmer devant l'œil attendrissant de notre chien sans en faire profiter instantanément la planète? De visiter un musée sans tweeter le moindre selfie?

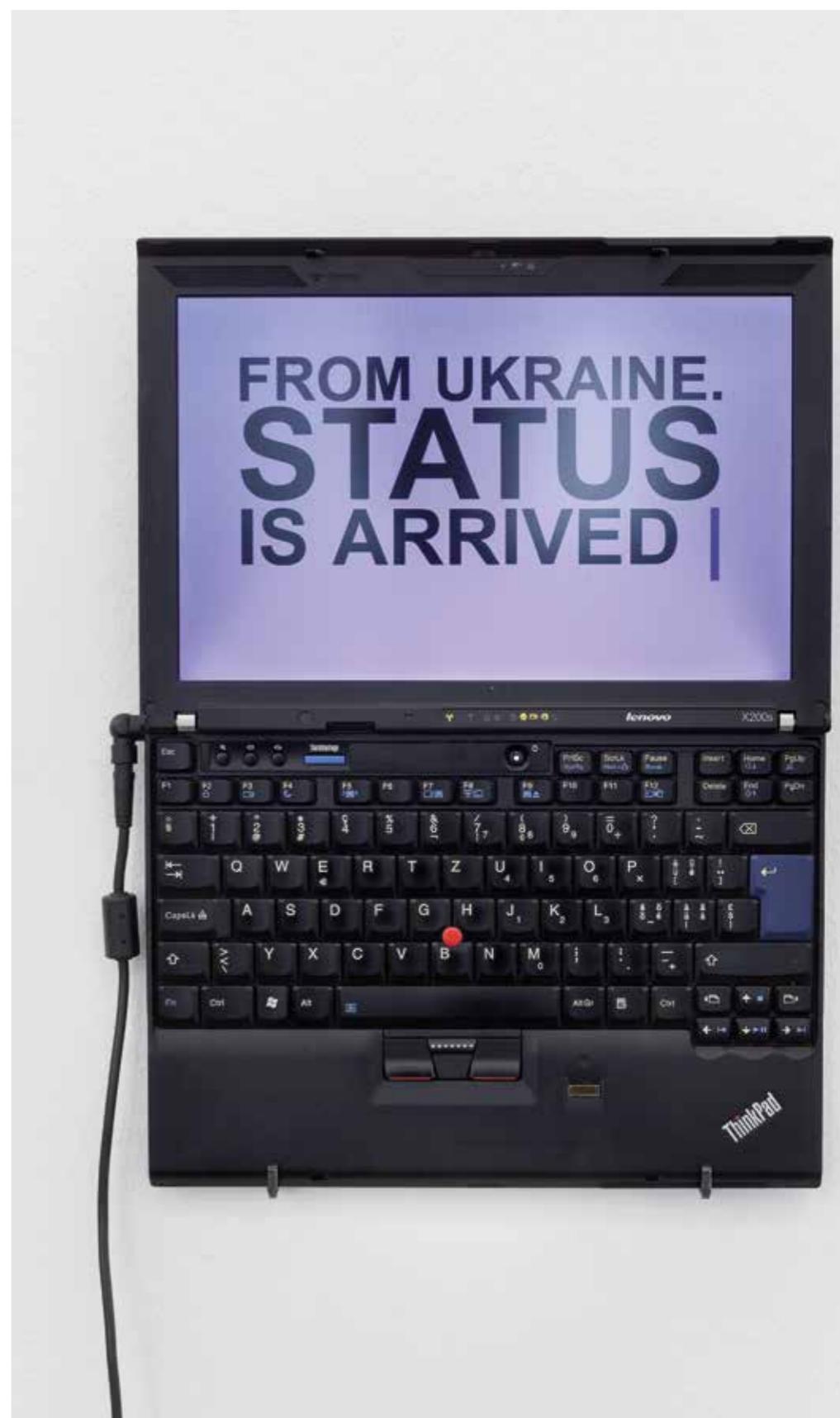
En 1994, Philippe Parreno s'interrogeait déjà: «Dans l'exposition Mondrian du musée d'Art moderne, les visiteurs désertent les salles d'exposition pour s'installer devant les écrans de télévision. Ils passent plus de temps à regarder les tableaux reproduits en vidéo que devant les originaux accrochés au mur. Pourquoi?²» Selon lui, c'était pour le visiteur une manière de se rassurer car «on ne sait pas, a priori, combien de temps regarder une œuvre d'art». Il était donc bien pratique que «le musée gère le temps du visiteur».

La question du temps dans l'œuvre, du temps de l'œuvre, du temps de l'art comme temps «réel» a été délibérément prise en charge et affirmée comme telle par les artistes dans les années soixante, bien que la question de sa représentation parcourt le vingtième siècle depuis les décompositions photographiques de Muybridge et picturales de Duchamp ainsi que des excursions Dada des années vingt au premier happening de Kaprow en 1959. *Sleep* d'Andy Warhol en 1963, les premiers *Détails* d'Opalka en 1965, les premières *Date Paintings* d'On Kawara en janvier 1966 juste avant les premiers coups de tampons-dateurs en série de Michel Parmentier puis, bientôt, les conversations sur le temps organisées par Ian Wilson et les expériences vidéo de Bruce Nauman et Dan Graham ont érigé le temps de l'horloge, minuté, martelé, en véritable sujet de l'œuvre visant dans le même mouvement à dépasser cette notion de sujet pour littéralement insérer l'art dans le temps de l'homme.

«Le temps réel n'est pas un gadget conceptuel: il induit un rapport avant tout politique, l'interaction régit les rapports au monde et les artistes en ont de plus en plus conscience.³» écrivait encore Parreno. Vingt ans plus tard, On Kawara, bien que décédé depuis sept mois, continue de tweeter quotidiennement: I am still alive #art.

¹ <http://www.wnyc.org/story/challenge-2-photo-free-day/>
Your instructions: See the world through your eyes, not your screen. Take absolutely no pictures today. Not of your lunch, not of your children, not of your cubicle mate, not of the beautiful sunset. No picture messages. No cat pics.

² Philippe Parreno, «Facteur Temps» (1994), in *Speech Bubbles*, les presses du réel, 2001, p. 19. Comme pour les deux citations suivantes.
³ *Ibid.*, p. 21.



!Mediengruppe Bitnik,
Random Darknet Shopper,
2014/2015.
Vue de l'exposition /
Installation view, «The Darknet»,
Kunst Halle St. Gallen.
Photo: Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen,
Gunnar Meier.

Si vous viviez à Zurich au printemps 2007 et que votre appartement était doté d'une ligne de téléphone fixe, il est possible que vous ayez reçu d'étranges appels qui vous donnaient à entendre les spectacles présentés au moment même à l'opéra de la ville. Confortablement installé chez vous, il vous était alors possible



A



B

A & B
!Mediengruppe Bitnik,
Delivery for Mr. Assange,
Julian Assange's Room, 2014.
Vue d'exposition / exhibition view
Helmhaus Zurich. Courtesy:
!Mediengruppe Bitnik

de profiter en toute gratuité des arias sur lesquelles s'époumonaient depuis la scène les sopranos et autres barytons de passage dans la ville qui abrite désormais le plus grand centre de recherche de Google hors des États-Unis. Bien sûr, lorsque ces événements sont diffusés à la télévision ou à la radio, vous bénéficiez d'une meilleure qualité sonore. Mais penseriez-vous à regarder un opéra à la télé? Avec *Opera Calling*⁴, le live vous arrive au creux de l'oreille, de manière totalement inattendue et, surtout, parfaitement frauduleuse. C'est que ce service d'appels à domicile n'est pas le fruit d'une politique de démocratisation culturelle des services municipaux zurichois mais bien l'œuvre d'un groupuscule d'artistes locaux: !Mediengruppe Bitnik. À l'aide de micros cachés dans l'auditorium de l'opéra et d'un ordinateur qui faisait office d'interface entre eux et les lignes téléphoniques des habitants, ils ont tenté de faire partager au plus grand nombre les spectacles relativement confidentiels de ce haut lieu culturel largement subventionné. Ces quelque quatre-vingt-dix heures de «piratage musical» ont évidemment donné lieu à des menaces de poursuites par la direction, restées sans suite.

C'est un autre type de «livraison à domicile», celle d'une pizza, qui leur a donné l'idée du projet qui les a rendus mondialement célèbres: *Delivery for Mr. Assange*. Alors que Julian Assange venait de se réfugier à l'ambassade d'Équateur à Londres et que l'œil médiatique était vissé sur la façade proprette du bâtiment de briques, les conversations allaient bon train sur 4chan et autres forums garantissant l'anonymité des locuteurs. Tout à coup, quelqu'un y suggéra qu'Assange devait avoir faim et qu'il serait judicieux de lui commander une pizza. Lorsque, quelques minutes plus tard, surgirent des mobylettes parées de caissons Domino's aux portes circonscrites non seulement des gardes protocolaires mais aussi de nombreux policiers, activistes, journalistes et curieux, Carmen Weisskopf et Domagoj Smoljo, membres fondateurs de !Mediengruppe Bitnik, furent frappés d'évidence: c'était la rencontre de l'histoire personnelle avec l'abstraction de la géopolitique⁵. Cette collision du trivial avec l'acmé d'une crise diplomatique à la fois sulfureuse et sociétale, mêlant affaires intimes et internationales, n'est bien entendu pas une première mais elle remémoré le passage à ce que l'on pourrait qualifier de «postmodernité sociale», soit l'avènement de la vie privée sur la scène publique, pesant de son poids comme jamais sur les affaires politiques. Si le Monicagate avec la publication à grande échelle du rapport Starr en 1998 marqua, selon les termes du philosophe Thomas Nagel, «l'apogée d'une érosion désastreuse de la vie privée⁶», cette affaire affirma dans le même temps la nouvelle toute-puissance de cette arme que tout le monde possède: l'intimité. Si c'est à nouveau elle qui ébranle la machine pourtant férolement huilée du fondateur de WikiLeaks, elle est aussi la brèche par laquelle le soutien peut arriver. La livraison de ces pizzas en zone d'immunité diplomatique sur commande de personnes personnellement étrangères à Julian Assange symbolise physiquement l'interaction possible et quasi instantanée que permet le web à toute personne connectée.

Six mois plus tard, poursuivant selon leurs termes cette idée de «casser cette barrière physique autour de l'ambassade», !Mediengruppe Bitnik adressait un colis à l'ambassade, un colis un peu spécial doté d'un téléphone en mode GPS et appareil photo programmé pour prendre une photo toutes les dix secondes et l'uploader dans l'instant sur un compte Twitter. Plusieurs batteries y étaient reliées pour lui permettre d'assurer son suivi en direct tout au long de son trajet dans Londres, du bureau de poste d'Hackney à l'ambassade. Cette performance de Mail Art du troisième millénaire dura trente-six heures, trente-six heures pendant lesquelles elle tint en haleine un certain nombre de followers mais aussi les téléspectateurs lambda de la BBC qui la retransmit elle aussi en direct. Pour ceux qui n'étaient pas devant leur écran les 16 et 17 janvier 2013, la vidéo qui en résulte⁷, en libre accès sur YouTube, fera office de séance de rattrapage. La question qui taraude tous ceux qui l'ont visionnée est la suivante: comment une vidéo qui montre majoritairement un écran noir — tout au mieux des images indistinctes — assorti de commentaires laconiques et on ne peut plus descriptifs tels que «Black», «Total Blackout» ou «Image Black» peut-elle être aussi passionnante?

Le suivi d'un colis postal standard peut déjà s'avérer excitant — dans la mesure du raisonnable, s'entend —, cette relation renouvelée à ce qui pouvait apparaître auparavant comme le «mystère postal», ce laps de temps entre le moment où l'on glissait l'enveloppe dans la boîte et cet autre moment où l'on avait confirmation qu'elle était bien arrivée à destination, offre aujourd'hui au consommateur inquiet que nous sommes la possibilité relative d'être tenu au courant du parcours de l'objet envoyé. Le suivi de colis a fait entrer dans le réseau numérique quelque chose qui, justement, en est à priori l'opposé: le courrier «matériel». Cependant, entre les informations glanées deux à trois fois maximum au cours de la journée sur le site de tracking et un suivi continu comme il est donné à voir dans *Delivery for Mr. Assange*, il y a là toute la différence qui fait le sel du projet, l'exploration du système postal. Outre l'impression de pouvoir se mettre à la place de l'objet colis pendant ces quelques heures de parcours, le visionneur / follower accède à une temporalité qui semble autre que celle dans laquelle il lui semble être plongé. La vidéo est un assemblage image par image rythmé par les tweets documentaires qui accompagnent chacune d'elles provoquant un éclatement de l'habituelle continuité du temps que nous sommes enclins à percevoir. Le temps réel y est à la fois effectif et mis en scène.

Après trente heure de pas grand chose — en ce qui concerne les images — résumées en sept minutes trente dans la vidéo, l'heureux dénouement fait apparaître des crocs acérés, quelques mots tracés au feutre sur des cartes blanches, diverses images puis, enfin, deux mains émergeant d'un hoodie kaki présentant des revendications silencieuses, toujours tracées sur le jeu de cartes blanches: *Free Bradley Manning, Free Nabeel Rajab, Free Anakata... Justice for Aaron Swartz... Transparency for the State! Privacy for the rest of us!*

⁴ <http://www.opera-calling.com>

⁵ Cf. !Mediengruppe Bitnik,
Delivery for Mr. Assange, 2014,
Echtzeit, p.15.

⁶ <http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/philo/faculty/nagel/papers/exposure.html>

⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zLTgghCuxg>

Qui eût cru qu'un feed Twitter pouvait être aussi addictif et, finalement, aussi émouvant? L'émotion suscitée par les images, bien qu'elle n'apparaisse pas de prime abord comme l'un des motifs du travail de !Mediengruppe Bitnik, semble pourtant aussi le sujet de l'une des pièces maîtresses de l'exposition que le petit collectif a co-organisée avec Giovanni Carmine, directeur de la Kunsthalle St. Gallen: «The Darknet – From Memes to Onionland. An Exploration». La pièce en question, *Emily's Video* (2012), est une vidéo d'Eva et Franco Mattes présentée sur un moniteur vertical nonchalamment adossé à un poteau de la dernière salle de la Kunsthalle. Réalisée suite à une annonce passée sur Internet qui proposait à qui le souhaitait de voir «la pire vidéo jamais vue», *Emily's Video* démarre comme un classique tutoriel: une série de personnes, face à leur webcam, s'assoient devant l'écran en affirmant «I'm about to watch *Emily's Video*». Certains fanfaronnent tandis que d'autres semblent quelque peu inquiets mais, très vite, les grimaces trahissent le dégoût et la gêne de ces spectateurs pourtant volontaires. Enfin, alors que quelques-uns rient aux éclats, il y en a qui détournent le regard, se cachent les yeux, stoppent le film, éclatent en sanglots ou quittent la pièce. Le duo new-yorkais propose ici l'une des vidéos les plus éprouvantes qui soient sans pourtant rien montrer d'autre que des visages de gens assis face caméra. Ici encore, l'effet de temps réel est saisissant, renforcé par le fait que nous savons que nous regardons une vidéo dont la durée est approximativement identique à celle visionnée par les protagonistes qui se trouvent de l'autre côté de l'écran. Le temps de visionnage de vidéos sur YouTube ou tout autre site d'hébergement de films est un temps suspendu, un temps d'absorption dans le médium, dans le flux d'images, dans le zapping qu'il incite à opérer, mais le voyeurisme qu'il induit bien souvent – via la propagation de vidéos personnelles filmées pour la plupart à la webcam – tend à lui donner une apparence de «temps réel».

Les images de la vidéo que l'on ne verra pas et qui est dite avoir été détruite après le projet, provenaient toutes du Darknet, ce double de l'Internet supposément 75% plus important que le réseau que l'on utilise quotidiennement, aux contenus non indexés par les moteurs de recherche et sur lequel !Mediengruppe Bitnik a envoyé un programme informatique – créé pour l'occasion de l'exposition du même nom – faire du shopping. Ce *Random Darknet Shopper* était chargé chaque semaine que durait l'exposition d'un budget équivalent à cent dollars en bitcoins dans le but de faire un achat au hasard sur Agora, une plateforme de marché noir qui est, si l'on peut dire, l'équivalent d'ebay sur le Darknet. Ses achats étaient ensuite adressés directement à la Kunsthalle puis placés sous vitrines individuelles. Parmi ses acquisitions: un scan de passeport hongrois, un tapis de passe-partout appartenant aux pompiers de Londres, de la MDMA en provenance d'Allemagne... Cette dernière n'a pas été du goût de la police helvète qui a saisi le *Random Darknet Shopper* le 12 janvier dernier, au lendemain du dernier jour de l'exposition.

Le temps de l'exposition se confondait ici avec le temps d'activation de la pièce qui présentait d'ailleurs sur un ordinateur accroché au mur aux côtés de vitrines qui se remplissaient au fur et à mesure, un suivi live des pérégrinations du *shopper*, mais ce simple rapport, qui se serait achevé avec l'exposition, a été prolongé au-delà du temps qui lui était imparti du fait de la saisie judiciaire. Le temps de l'œuvre qui était indexé sur le temps réel en est désormais tributaire.

S'il n'est pour l'instant question que du temps des œuvres évoquées ici, l'on ne doit pour autant pas occulter la juxtaposition d'espaces qu'elles produisent. Qu'il s'agisse de l'Internet, cet espace à la fois «parallèle» à l'espace physique que nous habitons mais qui, en même temps, influe sur lui et que l'on a ainsi de plus en plus de difficulté à qualifier de «virtuel» du fait des interférences quotidiennes qu'il entretient avec lui, ou, d'une manière plus prosaïque, de deux espaces physiques distants comme les appartements des Zurichoises et l'opéra de la ville ou encore l'espace public surveillé par des caméras et l'espace du surveillant, les œuvres de !Mediengruppe Bitnik opèrent généralement dans ce type de rapprochement: des «dérives» qu'ils proposent dans les villes à la recherche des caméras de surveillance disposées dans l'espace public (*CCTV – A Trail of Images*, 2008) à *Militärstrasse 105* (2009), pour laquelle ils captent les images des caméras de surveillance d'un commissariat voisin du lieu d'exposition et les y retransmettent en direct, ou encore lorsque que, pour *Surveillance Chess* (2012), ils hackent celles d'une station de métro londonienne⁸, proposant une partie d'échecs aux agents de sécurité. À la différence des autres pièces, celle-ci n'est avant tout destinée qu'à une seule personne, l'agent derrière l'écran de contrôle. Cherchant à rétablir l'équilibre entre observant et observé, *Surveillance Chess* transforme temporairement le réseau de surveillance en outil communicationnel.

Dès lors qu'il y a juxtaposition d'espaces distincts, il y a des interstices de raccord qui sont bien souvent des failles. Soulignant celles qui existent dans la législation⁹ ou réouvrant les débats existants comme celui autour du copyright avec *Opera Calling* ou *Download Finished* (2006), un logiciel de transformation de films qui faisait le lien entre la notion d'objet trouvé et les films partagés en peer-to-peer, !Mediengruppe Bitnik pointe notamment le fait que la technologie a toujours un temps d'avance sur la législation et que ce temps d'avance, qui peut se définir aussi comme un vide juridique, est un temps de recherche aussi fertile que potentiellement dangereux. #FreeRandomDarknetShopper

⁸ Le Royaume-Uni a été le premier pays au monde à généraliser la télésurveillance suite aux attentats de l'IRA. Il reste actuellement le pays d'Europe le plus télésurveillé, Londres étant réputée comme la ville où la vidésurveillance (tant publique que privée) est la plus importante. (wikipedia).

⁹ Il est intéressant de remarquer que la couverture médiatique relative à !Mediengruppe Bitnik se fait principalement dans la presse d'information et moins dans la presse artistique, comme si leur travail était avant tout considéré comme une information comme les autres.

!Mediengruppe Bitnik

What the Internet can do to Art, and Vice versa, on the Face of it, anyway.

by Aude Launay

"The Darknet – From Memes to Onionland. An Exploration"
Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen,
18.10.2014–11.01.2015.
With: !Mediengruppe Bitnik,
Anonymous, Cory Arcangel,
Aram Bartholl, Heath Bunting,
Simon Denny, Eva and
Franco Mattes, Seth Price,
Robert Sakrowski,
Hito Steyerl, Valentina Tanni.

The conceptualization of time has been endlessly evolving over time. There is, indeed, a circular argument here, but it is also true that its history might easily be traced in the history of thought as well as in the history of the arts. While the time of man—intuitive, phenomenological—and the time of science—necessary, relative, and even non-existent—still co-exist, it would seem possible to say that the perception of them that prevails these days is the one that emerges from instantaneity, whereas, in tandem, we have a perception of the world around us that is less and less direct and more and more mediated. So it is a temporal but not physical immediacy that is from now on best able to define our relation to the world. In fact, given the ten billion odd photos taken every month just by Americans—reaching the point where the idea of a Photo Free Day was even launched on 3 February last¹—, several issues are now being raised: What are people really looking at? Is taking a photo to be looked at later a way of seeing better or seeing less? Are we capable of looking at the world for a whole day just with our own eyes, without the help of a captivating illuminated rectangle on which to scroll, again and again? Are we capable of enjoying our meal without sharing what it looks like with our hundreds of social friends? Are we capable of swooning in front of our little doggie-woggie's touching gaze without instantly letting the whole planet in on the moment? Can we visit a museum without tweeting even a single selfie?

In 1994, Philippe Parreno was already wondering: "In the Mondrian show at the Museum of Modern Art, visitors desert the exhibition rooms and sit down in front of TV screens. They spend more time looking at the pictures reproduced on video than in front of the originals hanging on the wall. Why?"² According to him, this was a way for visitors to reassure themselves because "on the face of it, people do not know how long to look at a work of art". So it was quite practical for "the museum to manage the visitor's time".

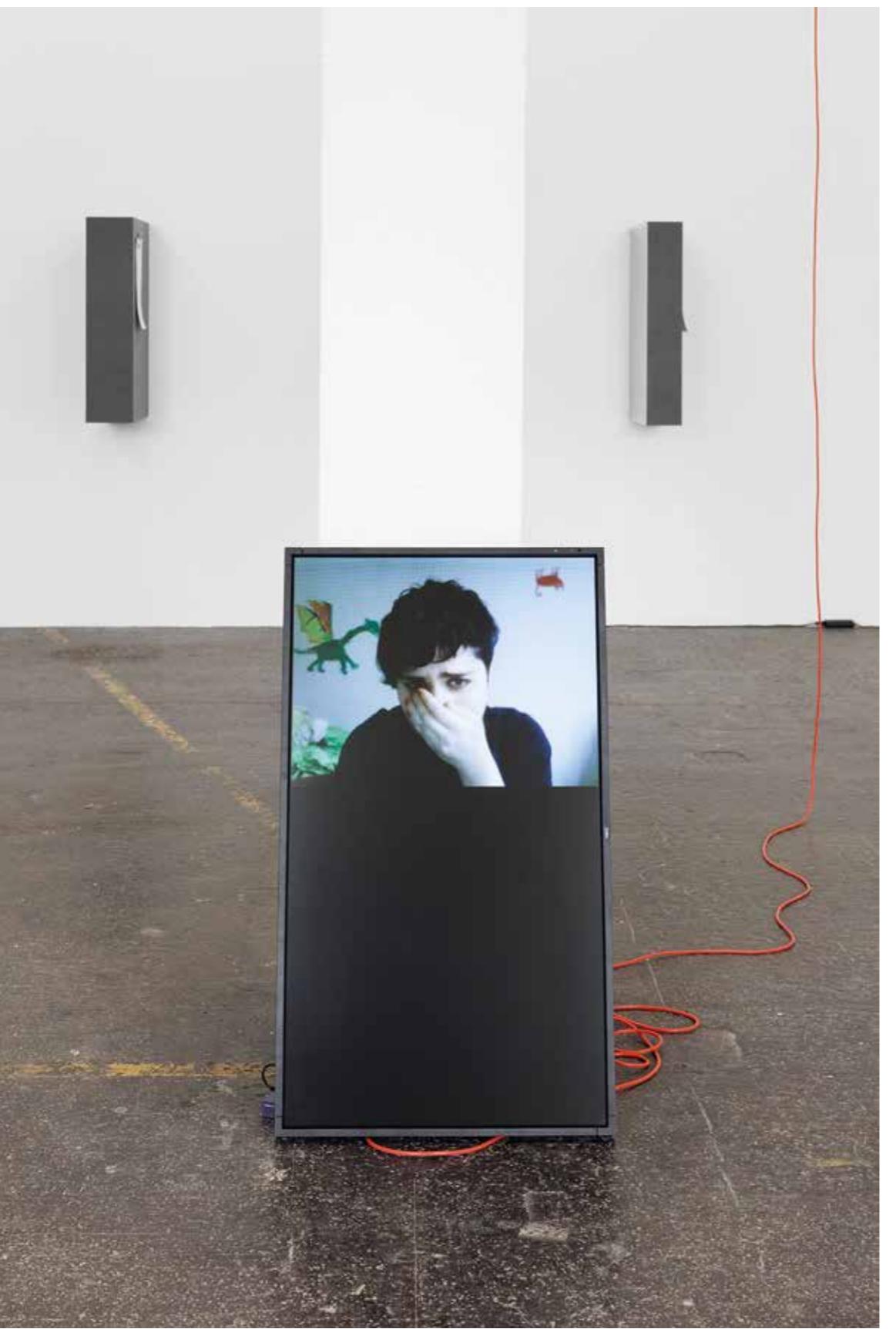
The question of time in the work, of the time of the work, and of the time of art as "real" time was deliberately taken up and stated as such by artists in the 1960s, even though the matter of its representation runs through the 20th century from Muybridge's photographic decompositions and Duchamp's pictorial decompositions, as well as the Dada excursions of the 1920s, to Kaprow's first happening in 1959. Andy Warhol's *Sleep* in 1963, Opalka's first *Details* in 1965, and On Kawara's first *Date Paintings* in January 1966 just before Michel Parmentier's first serial date stamps, then, before long, the conversations about time organized by Ian Wilson and the video experiments of Bruce Nauman and Dan Graham, all erected the time of the clock, timed and rapped out, as nothing less than the subject of the work, aimed, in the same movement, at going beyond that notion of subject, and literally inserting art into the time of man.

"Real time is not a conceptual gadget: it introduces an above all political relation, the interaction governs relations to the world, and artists are more and more aware of this,"³ wrote Parreno again. Twenty years later, and even though he died seven months ago, On Kawara is still tweeting every day: I am still alive #art.

¹ <http://www.wnyc.org/story/challenge-2-photo-free-day/>
Your instructions: See the world through your eyes, not your screen. Take absolutely no pictures today. Not of your lunch, not of your children, not of your cubicle mate, not of the beautiful sunset. No picture messages. No cat pics.

² Philippe Parreno, "Facteur Temps" [Postman Time] (1994), in *Speech Bubbles*, les presses du réel, 2001, p. 19. Ditto for the following two quotations.
³ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

If you were living in Zurich in 2007 and if your apartment had a land line, you might well have received strange calls which let you hear the shows being put on at that very moment in the city's opera house. Sitting comfortably in your own home, at absolutely no charge, you could thus enjoy arias being sung by sopranos and baritones, at the top of their voices, who were passing through the city, which now houses the largest Google search centre outside the United States. Needless to add, when these events were



**Eva and Franco Mattes,
Emily's Video, 2012.**
Vue de l'exposition /
exhibition view «The Darknet»,
Kunst Halle St. Gallen.
Courtesy Eva & Franco Mattes;
Carroll/Fletcher, London.
Photo: Kunst Halle Sankt
Gallen, Gunnar Meier.

broadcast on TV and radio, you enjoyed a better sound quality. But would you think of watching an opera on TV? With *Opera Calling*,⁴ the live broadcast goes straight into your ear, in a way that is completely unexpected and, above all, thoroughly fraudulent. The fact is that this household call service is not the outcome of a cultural democratization proposed by Zurich's city departments, but rather the work of a small group of local artists: !Mediengruppe Bitnik. With the help of bugs hidden in the Opera's auditorium and a computer serving as an interface between the microphones and citizens' telephone lines, they tried to share the relatively inaccessible spectacles put on in that generously subsidized cultural Mecca with as many people as possible. Those ninety-odd hours of "musical pirating" obviously gave rise to threats of court proceedings, which were in fact never taken up.

It is another type of "home delivery", pizzas, which gave them the idea for the project that has earned them worldwide fame: *Delivery for Mr. Assange*. When Julian Assange had just taken refuge in the Ecuadorian embassy in London, and the eyes of the media were riveted on the neat and tidy façade of the brick building, conversations were brisk on 4chan and other forums guaranteeing user anonymity. All of a sudden, someone suggested that Assange must be hungry, and it would be a good idea to order him in a pizza. A few minutes later, when scooters bearing Domino's Pizza boxes appeared at the embassy doors watched over not only by formal diplomatic guards but also by plenty of policemen, activists, journalists and curious bystanders, Carmen Weisskopf and Domagoj Smoljo, founder members of !Mediengruppe Bitnik, were struck by something quite obvious: this was where personal history meets the abstraction of geopolitics.⁵ Needless to add, this collision between triviality and the height of a diplomatic crisis that was at once sensational and societal, mixing private matters with international issues, was not a first, but it called to mind the shift to what might be described as "social postmodernity", i.e. the arrival of private life on the public stage, weighing in as never before on political affairs. The no-holds-barred publication of the Starr Report in 1998, during the Monicagate scandal, might have marked "the climax of a disastrous erosion of private life", to borrow the words of the philosopher Thomas Nagel,⁶ but that affair confirmed at the same time the new omnipotence of that weapon that everybody has: privacy. If it is once again this that is rocking the albeit ferociously well-oiled machine set up by the founder of WikiLeaks, it is also the breach through which back-up can arrive. The delivery of those pizzas in a zone of diplomatic immunity, ordered by people not personally known to Julian Assange, physically symbolizes the possible and almost instant interaction that the web enables any connected person to have.

Six months later, pursuing, in their words, that idea of "breaking down that physical barrier around the embassy", !Mediengruppe Bitnik sent a package to the embassy, a rather special package fitted with a GPS-mode telephone and a camera programmed to take a photo every ten seconds and upload it there and then onto a Twitter account. Several batteries were connected to the package to guarantee its live tracking throughout its journey in London, from Hackney post office to the embassy. This third-millennium Mail Art performance lasted 36 hours, 36 hours during which it kept not only a certain number of followers on tenterhooks, but also ordinary TV viewers tuned in to the BBC, which also broadcast the event live. For those who were not glued to their screens on 16 and 17 January 2013, the resulting video,⁷ freely accessible on YouTube, would act as a session for catching up with things. The question that niggles at all those people who did view it is the following: how can a video which mainly shows a black screen—or at best vague images—accompanied by laconic comments no more descriptive than "Black", "Total Blackout" and "Image Black", also be so amazingly interesting?

Keeping tabs on an ordinary postal package can already be quite exciting—within the bounds of common sense, let us hasten to add. That renewed relation with what might have seemed beforehand to be the "postal mystery", that time lapse between the moment when you slipped the envelope into the mailbox and that other moment when you received confirmation that it had reached its destination, today offers the anxious consumers that we all are the relative possibility of being kept informed about the whereabouts of the object dispatched. Monitoring packages has introduced into the digital network something which, it just so happens, is, on the face of it, the opposite: "material" mail. However, between the information gleaned two or three times at most during the day in question on the tracking site, and an ongoing follow-up which is presented in *Delivery for Mr. Assange*, there lies all the difference which gives the project its piquancy: the exploration of the postal system. In addition to the impression of being able to put yourself in the place of the package object for those few hours of its journey, the viewer/follower has access to a time-frame which seems to differ from the one in which he seems to be plunged. The video is an image-by-image assemblage punctuated by the documentary tweets which go hand-in-hand with each one of them, creating a breakup of the usual continuity of time that we are inclined to perceive. Real time, here, is at once effective and staged.

After 30 hours when not a lot happens—as far as the images are concerned—summed up in seven and a half minutes in the video, the happy outcome brings out sharp fangs, a few words written with a felt-tip pen on blank cards, various images, and then, last of all, two hands emerging from the khaki hoodie offering silent claims, again written on the set of blank cards: *Free Bradley Manning, Free Nabeel Rajab, Free Anakata... Justice for Aaron Swartz, Transparency for the State! Privacy for the rest of us!* Who would have thought that a Twitter feed could be so addictive and, when all is said and done, so moving?

Even though the emotion stirred up by the images may not, at first glance, seem like one of the motifs of !Mediengruppe Bitnik's work, it nevertheless also seems to be the subject of one of the key pieces in the

⁴ <http://www.opera-calling.com>
⁵ Cf. !Mediengruppe Bitnik,
Delivery for Mr. Assange, 2014,
Echtzeit, p.15.
⁶ <http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/philo/faculty/nagel/papers/exposure.html>
⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIZTgghCuxg>

exhibition which the small collective has jointly organized with Giovanni Carmine, director of the Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen: "The Darknet – From Memes to Onionland. An Exploration". The piece in question, *Emily's Video* (2012), is a video by Eva and Franco Mattes presented on a vertical monitor casually propped against a post in the Kunst Halle's last room. Produced following an announcement posted on the Internet which offered anyone so wishing a chance to watch "the worst video ever seen", *Emily's Video* starts out like a classic tutorial: a series of people in front of their webcams sit down in front of the screen, saying "I'm about to watch Emily's Video". Some of them boast and brag while others seem a little worried, but, in no time at all, the faces they pull convey the disgust and embarrassment of these viewers, even though they are volunteers. In the end, while some laugh out loud, there are others who look away, hide their eyes, stop the film, start sobbing, and leave the room. Here the New York twosome proposes one of the most trying videos there may be, but without showing anything other than faces of people sitting in front of a camera. Here again, the effect of real time is arresting, bolstered by the fact that we know that we are watching a video which lasts roughly as long as the one watched by the protagonists who are on the other side of the screen. The viewing time for videos on YouTube or any other site hosting film is measured in suspended time, a time of absorption in the medium, in the flow of images, in the zapping which it prompts people to do, but, in many cases, the voyeurism which it introduces—via the propagation of personal videos filmed by webcam for the most part—tends to give it an appearance of "real time".

The images of the video which we shall not see and which is said to have been destroyed after the project, all came from the Darknet, that Internet double supposedly 75% larger than the network which people use every day, with its contents not indexed by search engines and on which !Mediengruppe Bitnik has submitted a computer programme, created for the occasion of the exhibition of the same name—going shopping. This *Random Darknet Shopper* was loaded each and every week that the exhibition lasted with a budget equivalent to \$100 in bitcoins, the aim being to make haphazard purchases on Agora, a black market platform which, if we may so put it, is the equivalent of eBay on the Darknet. Its purchases were then sent straight to the Kunst Halle, and subsequently put in individual display cases. Among its acquisitions were: a scan of a Hungarian passport, an all-purpose kit belonging to London's firemen, and some MDMA—ecstasy—hailing from Germany... This latter was not to the liking of the Swiss police, who seized the *Random Darknet Shopper* on 12 January last, the day after the last day of the show.

The time of the exhibition became muddled here with the lifetime of the piece, which, incidentally, presented a live tracking of the shopper's to-ings and fro-ings on a computer affixed to the wall alongside display cases which were gradually filled, but this simple relation, which was supposed to end with the exhibition, was extended beyond the time earmarked for it as a result of the legal confiscation. The time of the work that was indexed to real time is henceforth dependent on it.

If what is involved, for the time being, is just the time of the works referred to here, we should nevertheless not cover up the juxtaposition of spaces that they produce. Be it a matter of the Internet, that space that is at once "parallel" to the physical space we live in but which, at the same time, has an influence on it and which it is accordingly harder and harder to describe as "virtual", because of the daily interferences that it has with it, or, in a more prosaic way, of two physical spaces as distant as Zurich citizens' apartments and the city's opera house, or the public place under surveillance by cameras and the space of the person in charge of the surveillance, the works of !Mediengruppe Bitnik usually operate in this type of comparison: from the "drifts" that they propose in cities to the searching of surveillance cameras placed in the public place (*CCTV – A Trail of Images*, 2008) to *Militärstrasse 105* (2009), for which they capture the images of the surveillance cameras of a police station close to the exhibition venue and re-transmit them directly to it, or when, for *Surveillance Chess* (2012), they hack the images of a London Tube station,⁸ proposing a game of chess to the security guards. Unlike the other pieces, this one is, above all, intended for a single person, the agent behind the control screen. In trying to re-establish the balance between observer and observed, *Surveillance Chess* temporarily transforms the surveillance system into a communication tool.

Once there is juxtaposition of distinct spaces, there are connecting interstices which are very often flaws. Underscoring those which exist in the legislation⁹, or re-opening existing discussions, like the one about copyright with *Opera Calling* and *Download Finished* (2006), a software package for processing films which made the link between the notion of found object and films shared peer-to-peer, !Mediengruppe Bitnik particularly singles out the fact that technology is always a step or two ahead of legislation and that this step ahead, which can also be defined as a legal void, is a search time that is as fertile as it is potentially dangerous. #FreeRandomDarknetShopper.

⁸ The United Kingdom was the first country in the world to introduce general tele-monitoring in the wake of IRA attacks. It is still the most tele-monitored European country, London being renowned as the city where video surveillance (public and private alike) is the most widespread. (wikipedia).

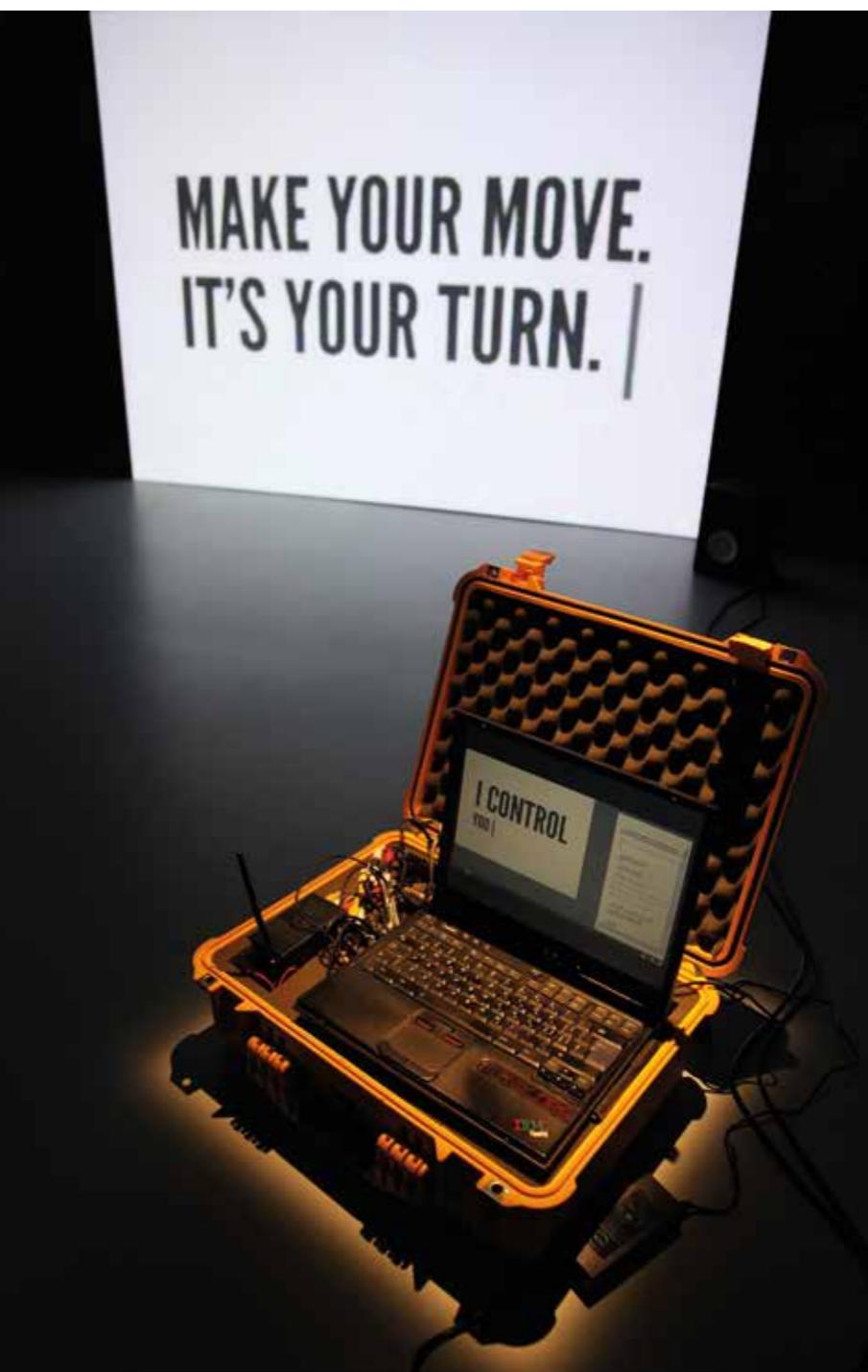
⁹ It is interesting to note that media coverage of !Mediengruppe Bitnik occurs mainly in the news press and less in the art press, as if their work was above all regarded as news, like any other news item.



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!Mediengruppe Bitnik,
Opera Calling, 2007.
Video still. Courtesy:
!Mediengruppe Bitnik
D
!Mediengruppe Bitnik,
Opera Calling, 2007.
Vue de l'exposition /
exhibition view,
Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich.
Courtesy: !Mediengruppe
Bitnik

!Mediengruppe Bitnik,
***Surveillance Chess*, 2012.**
Vue de l'exposition /
exhibition view,
«Network Hack»,
La Gaîté Lyrique Paris.
Photo: Maxime Dufour.

CULTURE

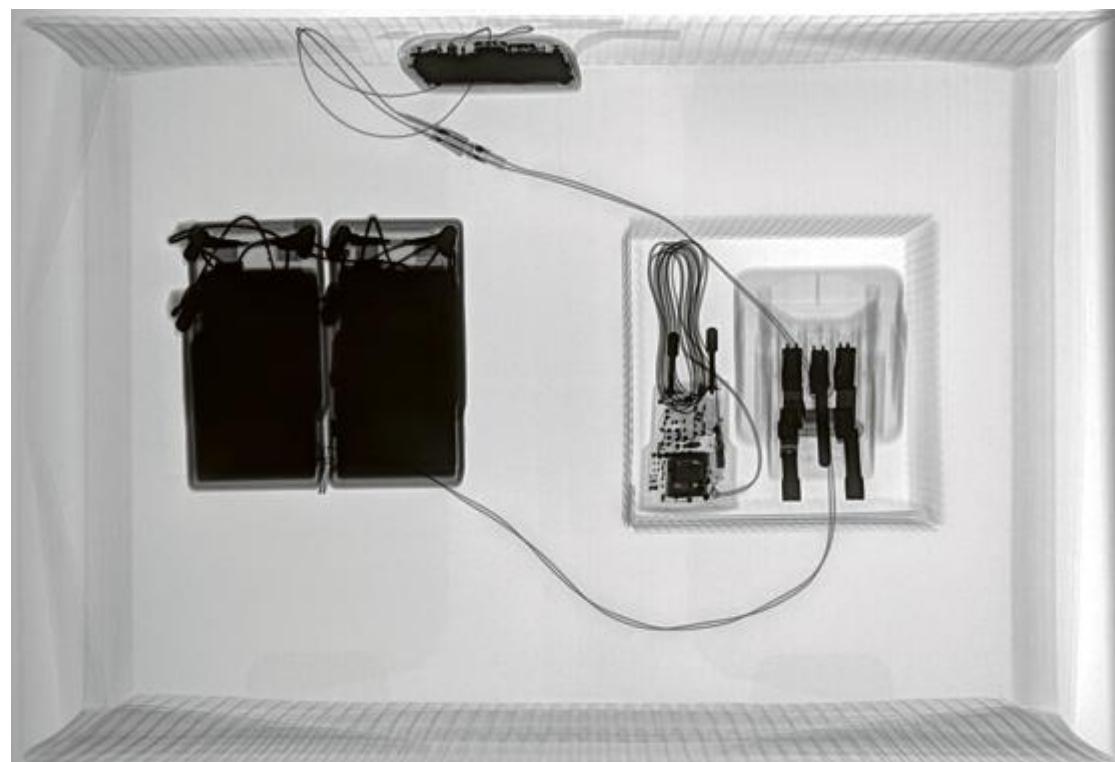
PERFORMANCE Une expo à Zurich revient sur l'envoi par un collectif de hackeurs d'un «colis» au reclus de l'ambassade de l'Equateur à Londres, en janvier 2013.

Julian Assange, accusé de réception

Par MARIE LECHNER

Le 16 janvier 2013, le collectif d'artistes hackeurs zurichois !Mediengruppe Bitnik (1) envoyait un mail qui allait tenir en haleine quelques milliers d'internautes à travers le monde. L'intitulé disait «*Delivery for Mr. Assange*», une livraison pour M. Assange, et annonçait une «*performance de mail art*» à suivre en temps réel sur Twitter. Elle consistait à faire parvenir par la voie postale un (vrai) paquet percé d'un petit trou contenant une caméra et un GPS au fondateur de WikiLeaks, qui était – et est toujours – recluse à l'ambassade de l'Equateur à Londres, sous très haute surveillance. Toutes les dix secondes, la caméra (d'un smartphone bricolé) prend une photo, automatiquement téléchargée sur Internet. La première apparaît à 12h38, dans la file d'attente d'un bureau de poste à Londres. S'ensuit un périple de plus de trente heures à travers le système postal britannique, dont un certain nombre passées dans le noir et l'incertitude, à se demander si le paquet va arriver à destination, ou être intercepté par les services de renseignements de sa majesté.

Le 17 janvier 2013, à 15h54, les artistes commencent à s'inquiéter, la batterie n'en a plus que pour six heures. A 18h04, une lueur d'espoir : apparaît un grand canapé en cuir et un extincteur, première vue de l'intérieur de l'ambassade. Puis un panneau blanc avec ce message manuscrit «*Is this thing on ?*» (ça tourne ?), puis l'image des crocs d'un puma, puis un autre panneau «*Hello World. Welcome to Ecuador*». C'est Assange qui joue avec le dispositif en présentant à la caméra des images de chats sauvages et de jungle. Après ces quelques facéties, il apparaît avec un sweat à capuche WikiLeaks, égrène d'autres messages face à la caméra, appelant à la libération de Bradley Manning, d'Anakata (l'un des fondateurs incarcérés de The Pirate Bay), ou encore de Jeremy Hammond (un hacker de Chicago condamné à dix



Le paquet percé d'un petit trou contenant une caméra et un GPS, envoyé à Assange. PHOTO IMEDIENGRUPPE BITNIK

ans de prison, qui a volé des numéros de cartes de crédit utilisées pour faire des dons à des organisations caritatives). Assange remercie ses supporteurs et invite à poursuivre le combat. Fin du premier acte. Cette performance postale est au cœur de l'exposition de !Mediengruppe Bitnik, au centre d'art con-

suit l'événement depuis son studio à Zurich, retransmis en live par de nombreuses chaînes, tout en gardant un œil sur les forums de 4Chan (prétendu repaire des Anonymous), où «l'Internet» préparait sa riposte. «Qu'est ce qu'on peut faire pour Julian ? Ils doivent être affamés là, bouclés dans l'ambassade ?

Je pense que je vais leur commander une pizza, écrit un usager anonyme. Quelques minutes plus tard, sur les chaînes télé, un livreur de

Domino's Pizza se frayait un chemin à travers les officiers de police pour sonner à la porte de l'ambassade. Puis un autre, et un autre. Un autre tchat suggère d'envoyer des taxis pour l'emmener à l'aéroport d'Heathrow, et peu de temps après, des dizaines de taxis avec la pancarte «Mr. Assange» encombraient les ruelles devant l'ambassade. L'anecdote est rapportée dans un livre qui retrace la genèse du projet

sur le mode du gonzo reportage (2). !Mediengruppe Bitnik observe ce fascinant moment de confusion où interfèrent crise diplomatique internationale, médias en pagaille, Assange, policiers et pizzas ! Ils se demandent quelle tactique adopter pour atteindre la personne la plus surveillée au monde. Carmen et Doma, de Bitnik, répondent à nos questions par mail.

L'envoi de ce colis était-il un moyen de dénoncer la situation étrange dans laquelle se trouve le fondateur de WikiLeaks ?

Julian Assange, comme d'autres défenseurs d'un Internet libre, activistes des droits de l'homme et lanceurs d'alerte, est la cible d'attaques violentes contre ses libertés personnelle et professionnelle. Cependant contrairement à d'autres, il n'est pas en prison mais vit cloitré dans l'ambassade d'Equateur, entouré constamment de policiers. C'est cette situation qui nous a interpellés, une rare manifestation physique des conflits qui ont

L'idée émerge dans la foulée du 16 août 2012, jour où l'ambassade d'Equateur accorde l'asile au fondateur de WikiLeaks.

temporain Helmhaus, à Zürich, où les artistes ont également reconstruit l'espace dans lequel Assange vit confiné depuis plus de dix-huit mois, encerclé par la police britannique.

L'idée émerge dans la foulée du 16 août 2012, jour où l'ambassade d'Equateur accorde l'asile à Assange. Le collectif suisse, qui détourne depuis quelques années déjà les technologies de surveillance,

émergé autour d'Internet et de la société de l'information. D'ordinaire, ces conflits ne sont visibles que dans les médias, mais à Londres vous pouvez visiter le site d'une impasse géopolitique, juste derrière le magasin Harrods.

La poste, médium un peu désuet, est-elle le dernier bastion d'une communication libre ?

Nous nous sommes demandé s'il était possible d'introduire un peu de normalité dans cette situation à travers un acte aussi banal que la distribution d'un colis. Nous avons choisi la poste parce qu'il existe toujours, du moins en Europe, des lois sur le secret postal. Alors que les mails sont copiés, stockés et lus en plusieurs endroits durant leur trajet, de l'émetteur au récepteur, les lettres et les paquets ne sont pas si faciles à intercepter. Notre action témoigne aussi de la tournure dro-latique, voire tragique, des événements.

Etiez-vous surpris que le colis arrive à destination ? Et Assange était-il au courant de votre initiative ?

C'était une expérimentation totalement ouverte, un «test système» en langage informatique. Nous avons construit le paquet, puis envoyé et perdu le contrôle. Nous n'en savions ni plus ni moins que les gens qui ont suivi la performance, tweetée en live. Nous avons informé Julian Assange dans une lettre ouverte peu après avoir posté le colis. Nous lui avons envoyé un message sur le compte Twitter @wikileaks et également via un ami des Yes Men, quelques semaines avant.

Dans votre message, vous invitiez Assange à envoyer le colis à une personne de son choix ?

Après «*Delivery for Mr. Assange*», il nous a invités à lui rendre visite à l'ambassade. Sur sa proposition, nous avons décidé de l'envoyer à Nabeel Rajab, défenseur des droits de l'homme au Bahrain et leader de l'opposition actuellement en prison. Nous avons reconstruit le colis, et ajouté des batteries supplémentaires pour un voyage plus long. A l'origine, nous souhaitions l'envoyer de l'ambassade d'Equateur



Le 17 janvier 2013, à 15 h 54, les artistes commencent à s'inquiéter, la batterie du dispositif envoyé par la poste n'en a plus que pour six heures. A 18 h 04, une lueur d'espoir : un grand canapé apparaît, première vue de l'intérieur de l'ambassade. Puis un panneau et des images de fauve, Julien Assange a commencé à jouer avec le dispositif. PHOTOS IMEDIENGRUPPE BITNIK

en juillet, mais à la date prévue, WikiLeaks était très occupé à essayer de sortir Snowden de Hongkong. Finalement notre paquet «post-drone» a été envoyé depuis l'ambassade le 28 octobre. Il aurait dû être livré au Barhein dans les quarante-huit heures. Mais au lieu de ça, il a circulé mystérieusement entre la Royal Mail, Fedex et le contrôle aux frontières de l'aéroport de Stansted, durant trois jours. Puis il a fini par arriver à l'aéroport de Dubaï où il a disparu. Nous ne savons pas exactement ce qui s'est passé. Fedex prétend qu'il avait été retenu indéfiniment aux douanes de Dubaï. Nous avons construit un second paquet qui s'est lui aussi retrouvé à l'aéroport de Dubaï où on a une nouvelle fois perdu son signal. A suivre donc, car nous n'avons pas renoncé.

La surveillance est un motif récurrent de vos projets. Comment avez-vous réagi aux révélations de Snowden ?

Le projet The Deliveries ne parle pas seulement de surveillance. Il s'intéresse à ce qui arrive aux gens qui défient les pouvoirs avec les moyens et l'ouverture d'Internet. La surveillance tout comme la liberté en ligne sont des thèmes cruciaux pour notre époque. Ils définissent

l'ouverture de nos sociétés. Pour des artistes comme nous, qui venons du Net et travaillons avec, les révélations sur l'espionnage massif de la NSA n'étaient pas une surprise. Mais c'était bien pire que tout ce qu'on avait pu imaginer. Le 8 mars, nous accueillons un événement intitulé «Art under mass surveillance» afin de réfléchir à ce que cela signifie de vivre dans une ère post-Snowden et à la nécessité de renforcer les collaborations entre

artistes, développeurs et hackeurs. **Pourquoi avoir reconstitué la chambre d'Assange ?**

L'endroit où il travaille est une allégorie contemporaine. Physiquement confiné dans 20 m², mais avec un accès aux médias de communication. C'est un centre nerveux des politiques mondiales. Comme le soulignait quelqu'un après que WikiLeaks a aidé Edward Snowden à se faire la malle de Hongkong, sans que les Etats-Unis puissent interve-

nir : «Un toit et un clavier, voilà tout ce dont Assange ait jamais eu besoin.» La chambre victorienne d'Assange, où la culture hacker (ordinateur, câbles, serveurs) clashes avec le mobilier de l'ambassade, est devenue une impressionnante manifestation de la manière souveraine et confiante dont WikiLeaks a continué à travailler dans ces conditions hostiles. Ils ont survécu au blocage bancaire et à de nombreuses autres attaques, Assange tra-

vaille avec des policiers derrière chaque fenêtre. Cette chambre est présentée au sein d'un vaste espace d'exposition de 140 m², il en émane aussi une certaine fragilité. ♦

(1) www.bitnik.org

(2) «Delivery for Mr. Assange/Ein Paket für Herrn Assange» éditeur Echtzeit Verlag

CENTRE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN HELMHAUS,
31 Limmatquai, Zürich (Suisse), jusqu'au 6 avril.

Le collectif !Mediengruppe Bitnik mène des opérations au contenu très politisé. Entre opéra et échecs, des hacks subversifs

Le collectif d'artistes hackers !Mediengruppe Bitnik n'en est pas à son coup d'essai. Retour sur trois de ses actions emblématiques.

Opera Calling (2007)

Pendant deux mois, Bitnik hacke l'opéra de Zurich, en y dissimulant des «audio-bugs», téléphones portables modifiés retransmettant la représentation en direct à des numéros de téléphone choisis au hasard dans la ville. Une

manière de rendre l'opéra, loisir considéré comme élitaire, au peuple. Quatre-vingt-dix heures de retransmissions ont été diffusées à 4 363 foyers en dépit d'une menace de poursuite de la direction de l'institution, finalement abandonnée.

Pirate TV station (2008)

En été 2008, ils mettent sur pied la première station de télé pirate de Jamaïque, dans une communauté rurale. En trois semaines, ils

construisent une microtélé locale à partir de composants bon marché, et invitent les villageois à autoproduire les programmes. Le collectif suisse participera également à la mise en place d'une station similaire à Saint-Nazaire-le-Désert, dans la Drôme.

Surveillance Chess (2012)

Un membre du collectif se plante sous l'oeil d'une caméra de surveillance, ouvre sa valise et active un bouton. Interférant avec le si-

gnal, il prend le contrôle de l'image, remplaçant la vue de surveillance par un plateau d'échecs et invitant le contrôleur à jouer : «Vous êtes blanc. Je suis noir. Appelle-moi pour me dire quel coup vous jouez. Voilà mon numéro.» Intervention qui vise à rétablir l'égalité entre observateur et observé et transforme le système de surveillance unidirectionnel en moyen de communication ludique.

M.Le.

Solo Exhibitions (since 2007)

- 2016 **Centre Culturel Suisse**, Paris
 Delivery for Mr. Assange, Zoo Gallery, Nantes
 Galerija Drugo More, Rijeka
 Is Anyone Home Lol, Kunsthaus Langenthal
 Random Darknet Shopper, Aksioma, Ljubljana
- 2015 **Random Darknet Shopper**, Horatio Junior London
 H33333333K, Art in Public Space, Haus of Electronic Arts Basel
- 2014 **The Darknet - From Memes to Onionland. An Exploration**, Kunsthalle, St. Gallen
 Delivery for Mr. Assange, Helmhaus, Zurich
- 2012 **Lügen: UBS Lies/ Polizei lügt**, Kunstkabine, Museum für Kommunikation Bern
- 2011 **Questions/Noise**, Substitut, Berlin
- 2010 **Jusqu'ici tout va bien**, Espace Multimédia Gantner, Belfort
 Too Big To Fail / Too Small To Succeed, SPACE Gallery, London
 Too Big To Fail / Too Small To Succeed, Les Complices*, Zurich
 Opera Calling, Projektraum Enter, Kunstmuseum Thun
- 2009 **Parasite's Delights**, Stiftung Binz39, Zurich
- 2008 **Our Man in India**, [plug.in], Basel
- 2007 **Download Finished**, Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich
 Opera Calling, Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich

Group Exhibitions (since 2007)

- 2016 **CAMÉRA(AUTO)CONTRÔLE**, Centre de la photographie, Geneva
 SEIZURE, Avalanche, London
 L'image volée, Fodazione Prada, Milan
 The Black Chamber, Mali Salon, Rijeka
 Digital Archives, Kunstverein Hannover, Hannover
 Nervous Systems, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin
 The Black Chamber, Škuc Gallery, Ljubljana
 The Next Big Thing is Not a Thing, Bureau Europa, Maastricht
 Kunst und Nachhaltigkeit Vol. 5: Prix Mobilière 2016, Die Mobiliar, Bern
 Hacking Habitat - The Art of Control, Utrecht
 Prix Mobilière, artgéneve, Geneva
- 2015 **Identifikuj me**, Galerija 12 HUB, Belgrade
 Always On, Schule des Sehens, Mainz
 (Artificial Intelligence) Digitale Demenz, HMKV, Dortmund
 Thing Nothing, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven
 Digitale Demenz (Artificial Intelligence), Eigen+art Lab, Berlin
 3rd Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art, Yekaterinburg
 GLOBALE: Infosphere, Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe
 Werk- und Atelierstipendien der Stadt Zürich 2015, Helmhaus, Zurich
 Wasting time on the Internet 2.0, Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf
 Athens Digital Arts Festival, Athens
 Digital/Analog: Indifferenz, Motorenhalle, Dresden
 Invent the Future with Elements of the Past, Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich
- 2014 **Cosmos**, The Shanghai Minsheng 21st Century Museum, Shanghai
 Leipzig Festival of Lights 2014, Public Space, Leipzig
 Performa Festival 2014, La Rada, Locarno
 大声展 - Get it louder, Biennial, Beijing
 net.art Painters and Poets, City Art Gallery, Ljubljana
 Swiss Art Awards, Basel
- 2013 **Monitoring**, Kunstverein Kassel, Dokfest, Kassel
 Flashbacks, Stadtgalerie Bern, Bern
 WERKSCHAU 2013: Werkbeiträge Bildende Kunst Kt. Zürich, F+F, Zurich
 Physical City - Sensing Place, Rua da Madalena Project, Lisbon
 BiennaleOnline 2013, Artplus.com, Internet
 Streetview, Lichter Filmfest, Frankfurt
 Social Sound, Stichting VHDG, Leeuwarden, Netherlands
- 2012 **Network Hack**, Mal au Pixel #7, La Gaîté Lyrique, Paris
 Werk- und Atelierstipendien der Stadt Zürich 2012, Helmhaus, Zurich
 Yes we're open, NiMk Netherlands Media Art Institute, Amsterdam
 The Social Contract, Artefact, STUK Kunstencentrum, Leuven, Belgium
- 2011 **The Revolution to Smash Global Capitalism**, Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich
 Together in Electric Dreams. Absent Presence, Beton7, Athen
 Cops and Robbers, 7th Piemonte Share Prize Exhibition, Torino
 One Hundred Days of Manifestation, Bblackboxx, Basel
 Swiss Art Awards, Messehalle 3, Basel
 Wem gehört die Stadt?, Schlachthaus Theater, Bern
 Together in Electric Dreams. Abwesende Anwesenheit, HEK, Basel
 Hoja Blanca - Weisses Blatt, Arte Centro Graciela Andrade de Paiz, Guatemala
 Hands on - Hacking & Bricolage, BAC Bâtiment d'art contemporain, Geneva
 Hoja Blanca - Weisses Blatt, Schmuck Inc., Weinplatz 7, Zurich

- 2010 **unterdessen**, Museum Bärengasse, Zurich
Hacking the City, Museum Folkwang, Essen
- 2009 **Cyberarts 09 - Prix Ars Electronica Exhibition**, OK Offenes Kulturhaus, Linz
Pronto!, [plug.in], Basel
Leftover, White Space, Zurich
Shifting Identities - (Swiss) Art Now, CAC Contemporary Art Center, Vilnius
Urban Jealousy - Roaming Biennial of Tehran, Centar za Kulturnu Dekontaminaciju, Belgrade
Neid, Kunststiftung, Zurich
Schmuck Inc. - RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT, Strehlgasse 26, Zurich
- 2008 **Urban Jealousy - Roaming Biennial of Tehran**, Kunstraum Bethanien, Berlin
Werk- und Atelierstipendien der Stadt Zürich 2008, Helmhaus, Zurich
StipendiatInnen, Stiftung Binz39, Zurich
Shifting Identities, Kunsthaus, Zurich
Swiss Art Awards, Messehalle 3, Basel
Urban Jealousy - Roaming Biennial of Tehran, Hafriyat Karakoy, Istanbul
- 2007 **Access, Shift** - Electronic Arts Festival, Basel
They call it Reality, Hartware MedienKunstVerein, Dortmund
TAGallery, online exhibition, cont3xt.net, Internet
25 Years, Jubiläumsausstellung Stiftung Binz39, Zurich

Public Interventions / Performances

- 2015 **Chelsea's Wall**, Elevate Festival 2015, Graz
Chelsea's Wall, The Influencers Festival, CCCB, Barcelona
- 2014 **The Hidden City: From Surveillance to Sousveillance**, Swissnex, San Francisco
Pirate TV Vol. II, Sonic Protest Festival, Paris
CCTV - A Trail of Images, Literatur und Strom Festival, Literaturhaus, Stuttgart
- 2013 **CCTV - A Trail of Images**, Invisible Zurichs, Gessnerallee, Zurich
CCTV - A Trail of Images, Rua da Madalena Project, Lisbon
CCTV - A Trail of Images, Festival politischer Medienkunst, Berlin
Your Own Private Pirate TV Station, Désert Numérique, Saint-Nazaire-le Désert
CCTV - A Trail of Images, with Benjamin Gaulon, Lichter Filmfest, Frankfurt
- 2012 **CCTV - A Trail of Images**, Sound Development City, London
(Un)friendly_takeover.exe, Corner College, Zurich
CCTV - A Trail of Images, La Gaîté Lyrique, Paris
- 2011 **CCTV - A Trail of Images**, House of electronic Arts Basel, Basel
CCTV - A Trail of Images, BAC Bâtiment d'art contemporain, Geneva
- 2010 **Following The Crisis**, Instructions for a Dérrive, Les Complices, Zurich
Following The Crisis, Instructions for a Dérrive, Space Gallery, London
Following The Crisis, Psychogeophysical Summit, HTTP Gallery, London
CCTV - A Trail of Images, Hacking The City, Museum Folkwang, Essen
Looking out for you - Instructions for a Dérrive, Kunstpassanten, Zurich
- 2009 **CCTV - A Trail of Images**, Tachometra, Vienna
CCTV - A Trail of Images, [plug.in], Basel

CCTV - A Trail of Images, Kunstraum Walcheturm, Zurich
CCTV - A Trail of Images, Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen , St. Gallen
CCTV - A Trail of Images, Goldsmiths College, University of London, London
CCTV - A Trail of Images, Roboloco, Reithalle, Bern
Our Own Private Pirate TV, Stiftung Binz39, Zurich

- 2008 **From TV to CCTV - Live TV Performance**, Quarantaine, Brussels
 CCTV - A Trail of Images, Piet Zwart Institut & WORM, Rotterdam
 CCTV - A Trail of Images, Gallery Eden 343, Sao Paulo
 CCTV Cinema, Kalkbreite, Zurich
 Die unsichtbare Stadt: Tools für Sousveillance, Kunsthause, Zurich
- 2007 **A Hack a Night**, Dock18, Zurich
 Citywalk with Sofatrips.com, Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich

Talks and Conferences

- 2015 **Artists Talk** , University of Basel
 Artists Talk , Academy of Media Arts Cologne
 Influencers Festival, Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona, Barcelona
 Parallel Polis, Kino 43, Prague
 Alles nur noch digital?, EIGEN+ART Lab, Berlin
 Darknets und ein Paket an Mr. Assange, Welkunstzimmer, Düsseldorf
 Kunst ist Manipulation, Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Stuttgart
 #FOMO Fear of Missing Out, Institute of Contemporary Art, London
 Artists Talk, Athens Digital Arts Festival, Athens
 Sealed with a bit, Re:publica, Berlin
 Videonale.15, Kunstmuseum, Bonn
 Art under Mass Surveillance, Museum Bärengasse, Zurich
- 2014 **On Darknets**, Palace, St. Gallen
 Here but Invisible, Kunsthalle St. Gallen
 Wie gefährlich ist Unwissen?, RAB Bar, Trogen
 Hacking as Artistic Practice, inauguration of Critical Media Lab, Basel
 Kultur an der Arbeit, Kunsthause, Zurich
 Zeitfugen, Umzonungen, Biennale Bern, Schlachthaus Theater, Bern
 Information as Reality, Lentos Kunstmuseum, Linz
 Hacking as Artistic Practice, HOPE X, New York
 Dorkbot San Francisco, Noisebridge, San Fracisco
 Who Are Hacktivists?, Swissnex, San Fracisco
 Art Meets Radical Openness, Servus.at, Architekturforum, Linz
 Literatur und Strom Festival, Literaturhaus, Stuttgart
 Ziviler Ungehorsam im Netz, taz.lab, Berlin
 Art under Mass Surveillance, Helmhaus, Zurich
 Reality Check #6 Between Private and Public Identity, Kunsthalle, Zurich
- 2013 **Hacking as Artistic Practice**, 30th Chaos Communication Congress, Hamburg
 Delivery for Mr. Assange, Verbindingen / Jonctions Festival, Recyclart, Brussels
 Surveillance Chess, rePLAYCE:theCITY, Gessnerallee, Zurich
 Prekäre Landschaften, Ringlokschuppen, Mülheim
 Physical City - Sensing Place, Rua da Madalena Project, Lisbon
 Delivery for Mr. Assange, Storytelling Konferenz, Volkshaus, Zurich
 Mikro.TV: Présentation du dispositif, Désert Numérique, Saint-Nazaire-le Désert

Agora zu Stadtraum und Öffentlichkeit, Streetview Lichter Filmfest, Frankfurt
Lost in Space - Kampfzone öffentlicher Raum, Kunsthaus, Basel
Hacking as Artistic Practice, Freie Fachschule für Tontechnik, Zurich

- 2012 **Public Lecture:RRR Radical Realtime**, Hochschule für Gestaltung, Offenbach a. M.
 RRR Radical Realtime: Hacking as Artistic Practice, 3 Biennale, Frankfurt a. M.
 Besides The Screen Conference, Goldsmiths College, London
 Round Table Event, Constant Variable, Brussels
 CCTV and Network Hacks Conference, La Gaîté Lyrique, Paris
 Panorama Event #1: Unstating the Obvious, Impakt Festival 2012, Utrecht
 Performativity of Code, Zurich University of the Arts, Zurich
 On the Make, with Philipp Meier (Cabaret Voltaire), University of Liechtenstein
 The Revolution to Smash Global Capitalism, Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich
- 2010 **Medienkunst im Kunstmuseum?**, Kunstmuseum Thun
- 2009 **Ruhestörung**, Symposium on Art in Public Space, Kongresshaus, Zurich
 Dis - Connecting Media, Symposium on intermedial aesthetics, University of Basel
- 2008 **My Fear - Your Castle**, RarBar, St. Gallen, Switzerland
 Transformationen, Komposition & Medienkunst, Museum für Gestaltung Zurich
 File Symposium 2008, Festival Internacional de Linguagem Eletrônica, São Paulo
 Hacker Space Fest, /tmp/lab, Vitry-Sur-Seine, Paris
- 2007 **interfictionXIV/2007 PATCH_WORK**, Film & Documentary Film Festival, Kassel
 Who owns Culture? - Panel, Shift - Electronic Arts Festival, Basel
 Open the Source, Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich
 Dorkbot Swiss, Walcheturm, Zurich

Screenings

- 2015 **Random Darknet Shopper**, The Dallas Medianale 2015, Dallas
- 2014 **Surveillance Chess**, Unlimited #8, Shortfilmfestival Cologne
- 2013 **Surveillance Chess**, National Centre for Contemporary Arts, Kalingrad
 Surveillance Chess, OK.Video Festival, Galeri Nasional Indonesia, Jakarta
 CCTV - A Trail of Images, Festival politischer Medienkunst, Berlin
 Opera Calling, Désert Numérique Fetal, Saint-Nazaire-le-Désert
 Surveillance Chess, VIDEOAKT 03, French Institute, Barcelona
 Surveillance Chess, Streetview, Lichter Filmfest, Frankfurt
 Surveillance Chess, Cine Tonala Theatre, Mexico City
- 2012 **Surveillance Chess**, Exploding Cinema, London
 Opera Calling, SIMULTAN FESTIVAL 8, Timisoara
 Surveillance Chess, IMPAKT Festival 2012, Utrecht
 Surveillance Chess, UCL Urban Lab, London
- 2007 **Resuscitate: Download Finished Screenings**, Gallery The Distillery, Boston, USA

Adam Harvey

<https://ahprojects.com>

Born in 1981 in the USA, Adam Harvey lives and works in Berlin.

He is a designer, artist and researcher exploring knowledge asymmetries in new technologies, mostly related to surveillance, privacy, and computer vision.

Developing works about the impacts of living in a world of surveillance technologies, in 2013, Harvey launched The Privacy Gift Shop as a conceptual marketplace for counter-surveillance art and privacy products including anti-drone fashion, camouflage from face detection and the OFF Pocket faraday case.

For « Welcome to Ecuador » he created *SKYLIFT*, which is a WiFi geolocation emulator that rebroadcasts the WiFi infrastructure at the Ecuadorian Embassy in London. *SKYLIFT* enables the Assange's room visitors to be virtually relocated to Julian Assange's real residence in London.

Exhibitions

Solo

- Think Privacy. New Museum Store Pop-up Exhibition. March - April. 2016.
- Stealth Wear & Privacy Gift Shop. New Museum Store Pop-up Exhibition. New Museum Store. August - September. 2013.
- Stealth Wear - New Designs for Countersurveillance. Tank HQ. London. 2013.

Group

- extra fantômes, La Gaîté Lyrique, Paris, France. 2016.
- Surviving the Glass System. Hong Kong Arts Centre. February. 2016.
- Magic and Power – Of flying carpets and drones. Marta Herford Gallery. Germany. 2016.
- FACELESS. Privacy Gift Shop Pop-Up Exhibition. Museumsquartier. Vienna.
- To See Without Being Seen: Contemporary Art and Drone Warfare. Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum. 2013.
- PANOPTICON. Utah Museum of Contemporary Art. 2015
- Permanent War: The Age of Global Conflict. School of the Museum of Fine Arts. 2015.
- Control. Museum für Kommunikation. Berlin. 2013.
- D.E.F.E.N.C.E.. Voegele Kultur Zentrum. Switzerland. 2012.

Speaking

- Privacy & Technology. Digital Catapult Centre. London. 2015.
- Digital Camouflage. NODE+CODE. Frankfurt.
- Surveillance Trend Report. European Commission Annual Security Symposium. Brussels. 2015.
- "Snowed-In". Fashion Institute of Technology. 2015.

Interviews

- Anti-Drone Camouflage: What to Wear in Total Surveillance. Wired. 2013.
- Anti-Surveillance. POST Matter. 2014.
- Rhizome: Artist Profile. 2012.

Awards

- Future Greats 2014. Art Review magazine. 2014.
- Webby Award Nominee for CV Dazzle. 2012.
- Core77 Design Award. CV Dazzle. Speculative Concepts 1st Prize (student). 2011.

Teaching

Stratosphere of Surveillance - NYU Fall 2015

Stratosphere of Surveillance is a graduate class at the Interactive Telecommunications Program at New York University that explores a multitude of surveillance technologies with a hands-on approach in order to formulate more informed ideas about privacy. Topics covered include: introduction to concepts of privacy and personal data, interrogation and information processing, web browsers and digital surveillance, WiFi MAC address tracking, MiTM web traffic inspection, biometrics and computer vision, expressive interference and artistic responses.

Recent works

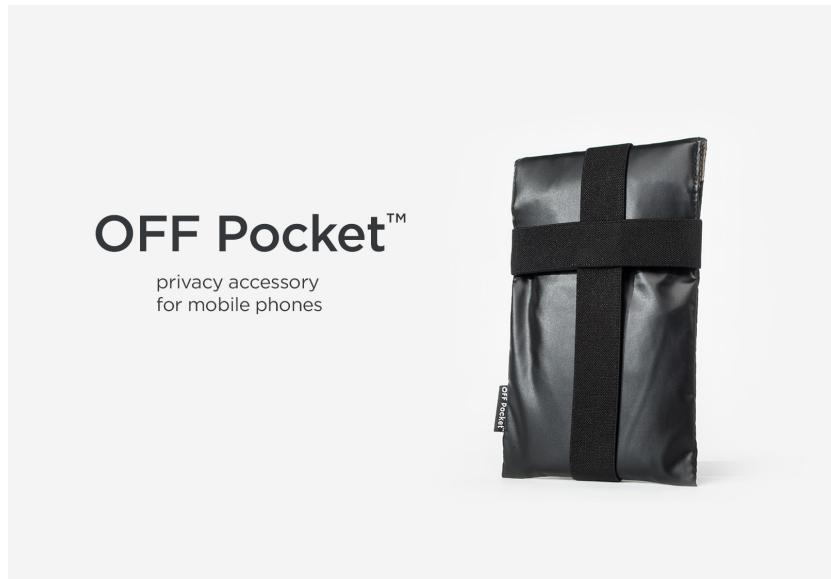


On top: *Think Privacy*, 2016.

Part provocation, part education, *Think Privacy* is a year-long art campaign to raise awareness about emerging issues in an era of exuberant data collection. *Think Privacy* officially launched at the New Museum Store in March 2016 and will run throughout the year.

Below: *Stealth Wear, Anti-Drone Burqa*, 2013.

Stealth Wear is a vision for fashion that addresses the rise of surveillance, the power of those who surveil, and the growing need to exert more control over privacy. The collection is inspired by traditional Islamic dress and the idea that garments can provide a separation between man and God. In *Stealth Wear*, this idea is reimagined in the context of drone warfare as garments that provide a separation between man and Drone. Items are fabricated with silver-plated fabric that reflects thermal radiation, enabling the wearer to avert overhead thermal surveillance.



On top: **OFF Pocket**, 2013.
(Faraday Cage Phone Case). The *OFF Pocket* is a privacy accessory for mobile phones. It instantly blocks all wireless signals from reaching your phone, shielding you from unwanted tracking or eavesdropping. It's also an easy way to disconnect.

Below: **CV Dazzle**, 2010-ongoing.
CV Dazzle is a type of camouflage from computer vision. It uses bold patterning to break apart the expected features targeted by computer vision algorithms. Because face detection is the first step in any automated facial recognition system, blocking the detection stage also blocks any subsequent facial analysis including recognition and emotional analysis. Therefore, *CV Dazzle* blocks facial recognition by blocking face detection.
The name of the project was inspired by WWI ship camouflage called Dazzle that used cubist-inspired designs to break apart the visual continuity of a battleship in order to conceal its orientation and size. Similarly, *CV Dazzle*, short for Computer Vision Dazzle, uses bold, graphic designs that break apart the visual continuity of a face. While the end result is still visible to human observers, *CV Dazzle* blocks detection by computer vision.
For the best performance, a *CV Dazzle* look is highly specific to the situation, is unique to the wearer, and is (hopefully) still socially/fashionably acceptable.

Adam Harvey

Press clips from

Wired [US]

CNN [US]

Motherboard [CA]

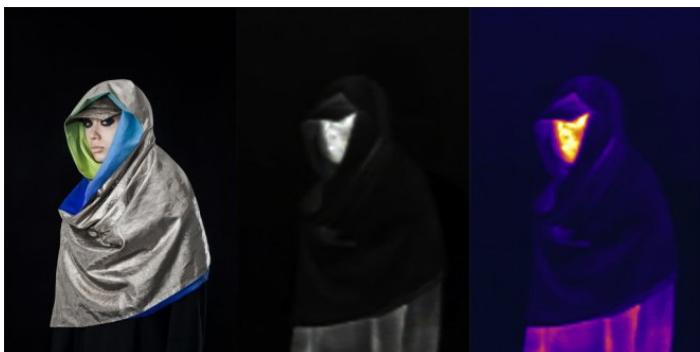
Libération [FR]

Usbek & Rica [FR]

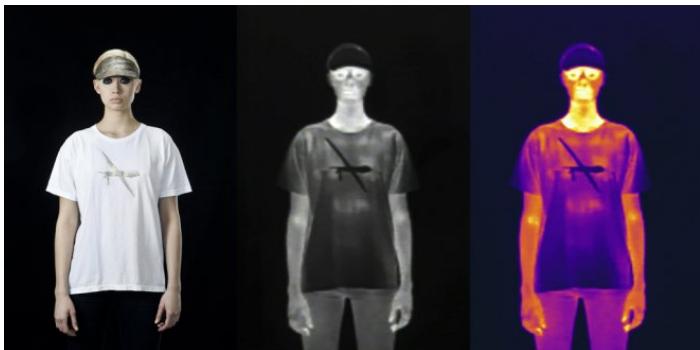
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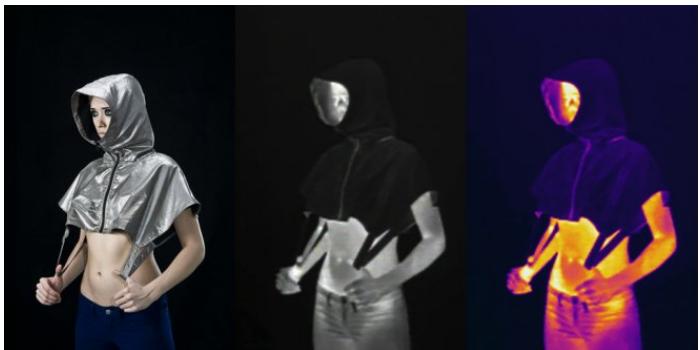
ANTI-DRONE CAMOUFLAGE: WHAT TO WEAR IN TOTAL SURVEILLANCE



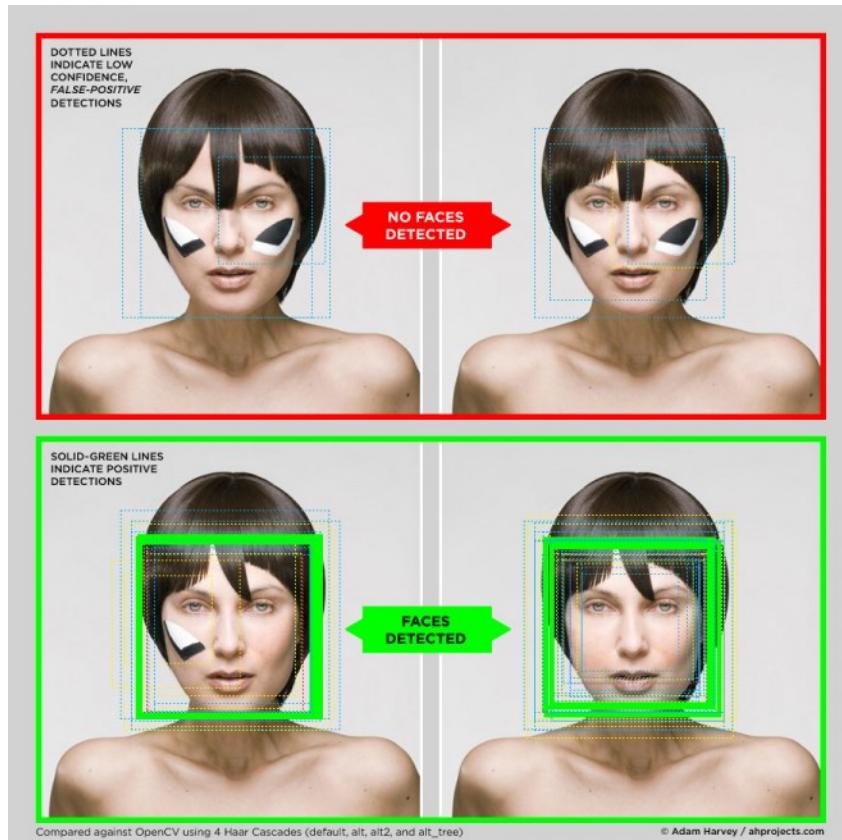
The anti-drone scarf is meant to be worn as a hijab. "It is also inspired by the rationale behind the hijab," says Harvey, "'the veil which separates man or the world from God,' replacing God with drone."



The thermal visor is a more simple garment, and really only serves to hide the face from above. The UAV silhouette playfully acts as anti-camouflage, showing up as a sharp image in thermal photos.



The bare midriff of the hoodie highlights the effectiveness of its thermal camouflaging. "I wanted to do a hoodie because it assumes that there is a high enough demand for anti-thermal imaging clothes that one would want to add style," says Harvey.



Harvey's CV Dazzle project used a variety of makeup strategies to defeat current facial-recognition systems. Like WWI Dazzle camouflage, it works by breaking up the image, so the viewer won't recognize what they are seeing.

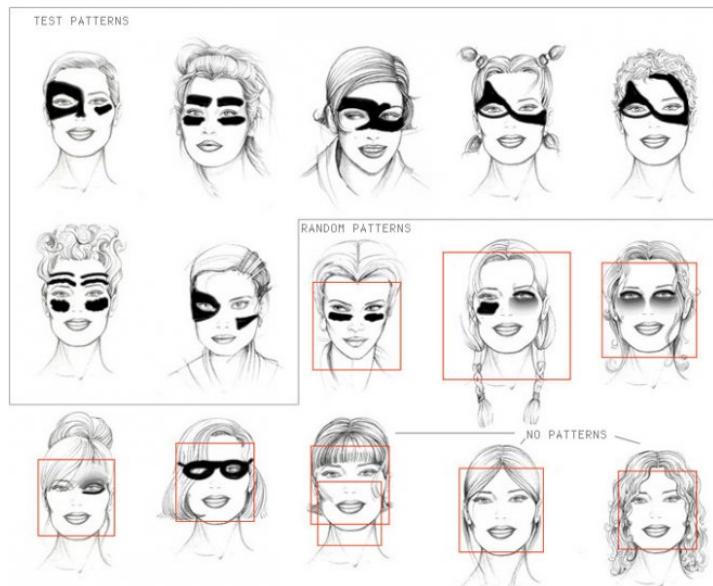


Figure Drawing for Fashion Design by Pepin Press

One of the strangest things about the CV Dazzle makeup is how much it looks like something David Bowie or '80s cyberpunks would wear. Little did we know that their outlandish future aesthetics would have operational advantages.



CamoFlash exploits the fact that the speed of light is faster than the speed of a shutter. When it detects a flash going off, it fires one of its own, overloading the light sensor.

The future of privacy is looking grim. Artist Adam Harvey wants to design something about that. For the past four years, Harvey has been exploring the possibilities of counter-surveillance fashion. His latest addition is a collection of clothes and accessories called Stealth Wear. The collection includes an anti-drone hoodie and scarf that are designed to thwart the thermal-imaging technology widely used by UAVs, and the OFF Pocket, a phone accessory that blocks all incoming and outgoing communication from your phone. Harvey's earlier work includes the CamoFlash, a set of powerful LEDs that trigger when it detects camera flashes, turning the tools of the paparazzi against them, and CV Dazzle, a experiment with makeup and hair styles that will confuse facial-recognition systems. In total, it's a body of work that pushes against a future of total surveillance. Like the best fashion, Harvey's work is at once practical and wearable and an artistic provocation.

"Total surveillance is a term I first heard from Anders Sandberg during this presentation at a Tabula Rasa conference," says Harvey. "He predicts that by 2050 a country can execute total surveillance on a population for .01% of their GDP."

What does he mean by total surveillance? "I asked him what he meant — I was also confused — and it basically pertains to recording audio/video 24/7 of every citizen. This was based on some research he's done." It's Moore's law for the surveillance age. As sensors get cheaper and more ubiquitous, and as we wire ourselves and our spaces up with cameras and other gear, it becomes harder and harder to not record everything.

Here's a quick tour of the contemporary surveillance landscape. A father accidentally spies on his daughter with a smart meter; the iPhone's location database accidentally tracks everywhere you've been; Facebook users' public info turns out to be great for stalker applications; more and more companies are coming out with life cams; and everyone's getting a drone.

Wired chatted with Harvey about the story behind his pieces.

Wired: How did you get into countermeasure clothing in the first place?

Adam Harvey: I aestheticize something that I'm passionate about. Privacy and surveillance are defining who we are, how we dress, and how we act with each other. I'm very interested in seeing how this will play out in terms of how we treat other's data and how we balance security with privacy. As the security industry grows, we're forced to define and redefine what privacy means. Also, each new generation will have a different idea of what privacy means.

I don't want the next generation to grow up thinking that giving away all of your personal data for free is the norm. If we're on track for total surveillance, then good countermeasures are essential. These don't have to be limited to fringe interest groups either. Counter surveillance could become the norm. The OFF Pocket is designed with everyone in mind from high schoolers to hackers to politicians. We're all being tracked, but some of it can be controlled.

Wired: How did the Stealth Wear project come about?

Harvey: Stealth Wear started as an experiment using the fabrics I was researching for the OFF Pocket. I did research on thermal surveillance and was very interested in where it was going and at some point realized that metalised fabrics work as a shield against thermal imaging cameras. I was able to get access to a thermal camera and started testing swatches of fabric. When I realized that it worked well enough, I got in touch with my friend Johanna Bloomfield and she came up with the hoodie design. Everything was pretty much still an experiment at this point. Then we showed the hoodie to Andrew Green from PRIMITIVE. He loved it and decided to include it and make it a major part of this upcoming show. Originally this show was to be based on work from CV Dazzle and a few other counter surveillance art projects. This whole idea of stealth wear line was very emergent.

Wired: Any specific symbolism in a hoodie and a scarf or simply practicality?

Harvey: I wanted to do a hoodie because it assumes that there is a high enough demand for anti-thermal imaging clothes that one would want to add style. I'm creating the future I want to see: people wearing stylish clothes that block surveillance and enhance privacy. Functionally, the hoodie is designed to thwart thermal surveillance from above and is wide enough to block a vertical over shot. The hood is exaggerated to provide additional face concealment.

The scarf is intended to be worn as a hijab. It is also inspired by the rationale behind the hijab, "the veil which separates man or the world from God", replacing God with drone. The interior color is the inverse color scheme of the heat map gradient.

Wired: Is there a particular reason you're intervening at this particular scale?

Harvey: I see a future where individuals are more in control of their privacy. And I see fashion as a vehicle for getting there. Conformity is what surveillance wants and fashion is anti-conformist. And I think the decision to conform or not happens on a personal level. The projects I've been working on act upon surveillance in a way that exploits a vulnerability and makes this vulnerability accessible through using something ordinary (hair, makeup, or fashion) in a non-conformist and legal way. So far, I haven't had any problems with legal issues. In fact, I've been invited to a biometrics conference to discuss my work and really enjoy meeting people in this field. Even someone from DARPA recognized my work and seemed to enjoy it. Ideally, these projects, which take place at a personal level, could function to influence people at a higher policy-making level.

Wired: To what extent do you think these clothing/tools will actually be effective?

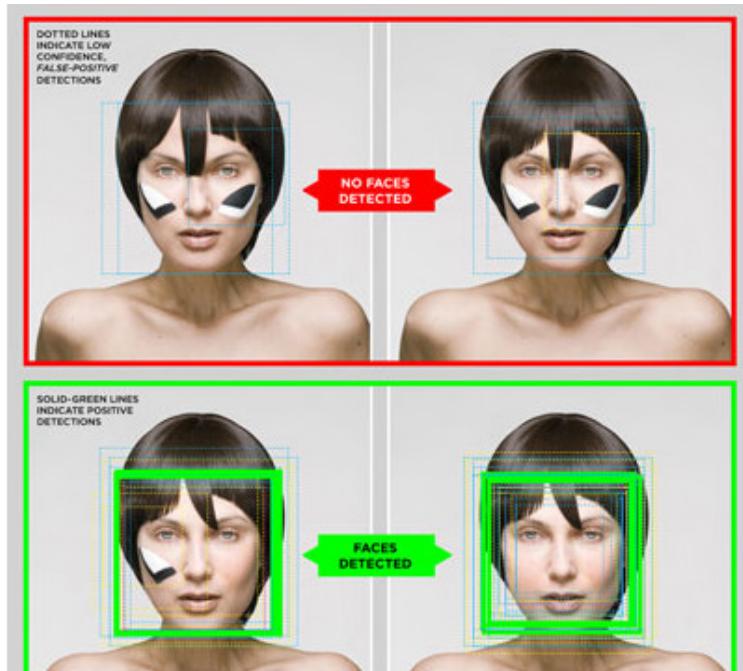
Harvey: I designed the OFF Pocket to be inconspicuous. The "Anti-Drone" Hoodie is more or less indistinguishable from other high fashion. Hiding in plain sight is definitely the goal. But what we define as familiar versus conspicuous changes everywhere we go. In Williamsburg I see people riding 10 ft tall bicycles and it's normal. On the NYC subway, crazy people scream and no one even notices. In Penn Station there are soldiers with automatic weapons. These are all normal.

What I think we don't realize is that surveillance is taking place almost everywhere we go now, and it should be normal for us to dress in a way that is conscious of this. At some point, it might be weird to not have an OFF Pocket or a thermally reflective garment. Or, maybe just unfashionable.

The collection is being hosted by [PRIMITIVE in London](#) and opens to the public on January 18.

How to hide from face-detection technology

Updated 1425 GMT (2225 HKT) April 29, 2012



COURTESY ADAM HARVEY

By **John D. Sutter**, CNN

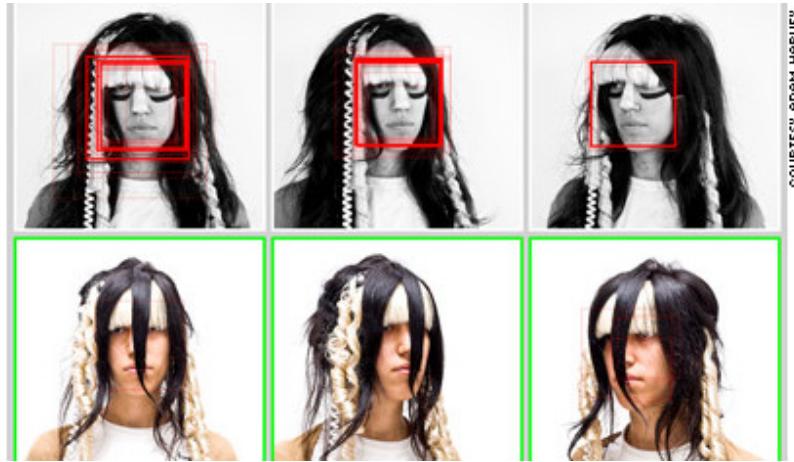
(CNN) --- If you take Adam Harvey's advice, here's what you might wanna wear to a party this weekend: A funny hat, asymmetrical glasses, a tuft of hair that dangles off your nose bridge and, most likely, a black-and-white triangle taped to your cheekbone. Optional: Cubic makeup patterns all around your eyes.

All of these otherworldly fashion accessories -- which could leave a person looking kind of like an [opulent villain from "The Hunger Games"](#) -- have a singular goal: to stop your face from being detected by cameras and computers. Called [CV Dazzle](#) (short for "computer vision dazzle;" more on the name later), Harvey's project is a provocative and largely theoretical response to the rise of surveillance cameras on street corners and face-detecting technology that's been incorporated into social networking sites like [Facebook](#) and [Flickr](#).

If you employ these techniques, Harvey, 30, hopes computers won't even know you have a face:

I don't want to be unrealistic about it. It's a pretty conceptual project but it seems to touch on a subject that people are still trying to figure out, which is how to adapt to living in surveillance societies, where not only are you being watched by government surveillance but by citizen surveillance and social-media-type surveillance.

The face appendages aim to trick face detection software by obscuring computer-readable parts of your face. According to Harvey, the key part of the face that computers can read is the "nose bridge," or the area between the eyes. If you can obscure that, you have a good chance of tricking computers into thinking you don't have a face, he said. Another technique is to create an "anti-face," which is less terrifying than it sounds since it just means inverting your face's color scheme. So the black-and-white triangles on the cheeks aim to achieve this effect.



COURTESY ADAM HARVEY

Or, you could just sport a popped collar or a hoodie. More from Harvey:
One idea I'm working on is a double flip-up collar. It's not much different from a hoodie except that you can fold it down and it's a new style. The hoodie works great, but of course it's kind of suspicious.

Asymmetry also fools computers, he said, since software first looks for symmetry in a face. Harvey developed this concept as a grad-student project at New York University starting in 2010. He hopes to soon put out a fashion guide to avoiding face detection and wants to work with fashion designers to create accessories that trick peeping cameras. He's also working on a computer program that would allow people to draw their own anti-detection fashion, then test it virtually to see if it actually works before they go wandering out of the house with bangs hanging over their noses.

Oh, and the name: "Dazzle" refers to a particular type of camouflage that was used by ships in World War I. The cubist-style pattern on the boats wasn't meant to blend into the surroundings, exactly, but it did have a confusing effect, he said. "Zebras use dazzle camouflage," he said. "If they're all running around it's increasingly difficult to see how many there are. That's the advantage to them."

Harvey said he's not completely against face detection in all cases, but he thinks the technology "oscillates between cool and freaky." The public thinking on privacy, has "really turned upside down," he said. "Anything you do in favor of privacy can raise a lot of suspicion now."

He doesn't take things so seriously that he actually wears this stuff to parties, however. He's actually never tried that himself, he said, but is trying to come up with a hat that will look cool and still could conceal his identity -- at least from the computers.

These 'Think Privacy' Posters Make Perfect Gifts for Cypherpunks and Paranoids

2 December 2015 // 12:00 PM CET



Written by
JOSHUA KOPSTEIN
CONTRIBUTOR



think privacy

Image: [Privacy Gift Shop](#)

“Safety First.” “Hang in there, baby.” “Loose lips sink ships.”

We've all seen these classic motivational messages stuck to the walls of peoples' homes and offices. But today we live under a much different set of anxieties, and counter-surveillance artist Adam Harvey thinks it's time for an update.

When I visited his studio at the New York City-based tech-art incubator NEW INC last week, Harvey was hunkered over a laser-cutting machine, overseeing the production of dozens of brightly-colored placards.

“Metadata Kills,” one blood-red design reads, a reference to the [infamous comments by former NSA chief Michael Hayden](#) about how the US government uses the digital residue produced by cellphones to target drone strikes.

Another, colored in that unmistakable shade of Facebook Blue, says “Fuck My Like,” a modern day lament that “Big Data Knows More About My Life Than I Do.” A bright yellow and black message warns me to “Mind The Cyber Things,” the increasing number of household devices that connect to the internet, capture personal information, and [inevitably betray us](#).

The placards are part of “Think Privacy,” a color-coded public awareness campaign in the form of signage and tchotchkies for your home and office—like materials for an employee training program that never left the corporate board room.

Harvey says the project was modeled after a sign he saw at his previous art studio that read “THINK SAFETY” on a neon orange background. “This was good advice when placed next to a drill press, but heavy machinery safety is no longer a daily concern and privacy is,” he told me,

saying he wanted to “bring color and attention to more contemporary issues around data, privacy, and surveillance.”

Part souvenir, part political art, the products are the latest addition to Harvey's [Privacy Gift Shop](#), an online storefront that sells [anti-drone burgas](#) and other surveillance-related accessories.

Think Privacy's messages come in various formats, including wall placards, coasters, refrigerator magnets, and soon coffee mugs and other ephemera, all sporting messages of sensible paranoia that seem right at home in the age of mass-surveillance.



Image: [Privacy Gift Shop](#)

Spreading that awareness is always a tricky balancing act. Not a week goes by without news of some new privacy intrusion. Yet it's still mostly privacy wonks and professionals like Harvey who walk around realizing that—for example—their Facebook Likes can be used to [determine their mental state, sexual preferences, politics, and more](#) with surprising accuracy.

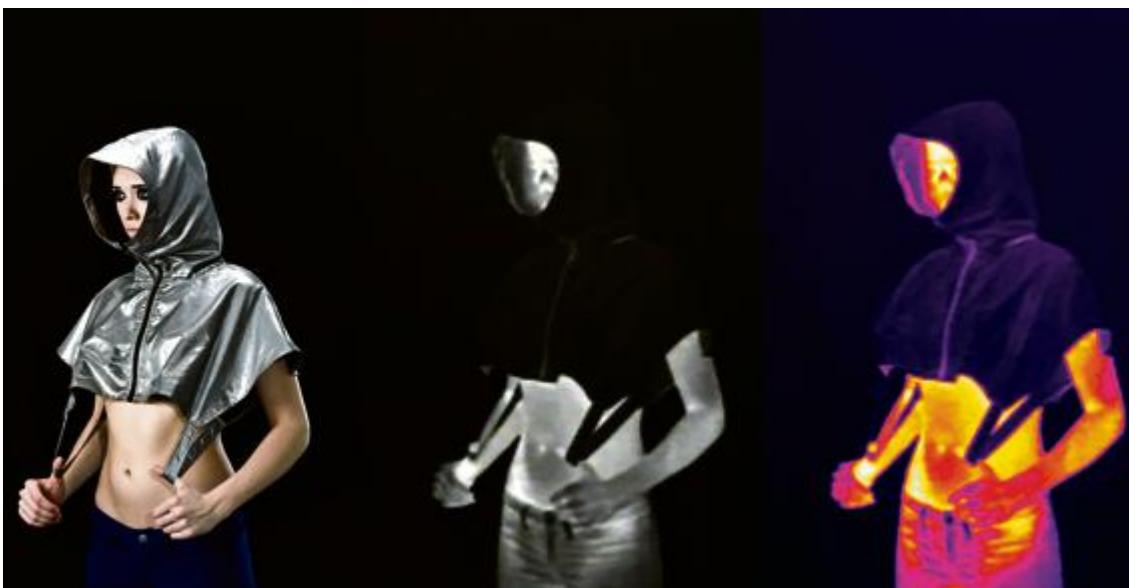
“I didn't want the messages to sound too preachy so I aimed for a 80/20 balance between provocation and education for each sign,” Harvey wrote to me later in an encrypted email. “The provocation is bold and short, and the pedagogical part sits less conspicuously within the larger letters.”

You might know Harvey as the creator of [CV Dazzle](#), a series of makeup patterns designed to confuse facial recognition algorithms. He also designed the OFF Pocket, a sleek [cellphone Faraday pouch](#) that lets users to avoid tracking and surveillance by blocking their phone's incoming and outgoing radio signals. (Metadata kills, remember?) The Pocket is currently getting a major upgrade, and the new-and-improved version will be on sale in early 2016, Harvey tells me.

Think Privacy launched earlier this week on Cyber Monday, and the shop plans to add more items soon to fully flesh out the campaign with all manner of privacy stocking-stuffers. And with the holidays fast-approaching, now might be your only chance to pick up that “Born Paranoid” [stainless steel coaster](#) for the hardcore Infosec junkie in your life.

Pour dénoncer et se soustraire à la surveillance généralisée, artistes et designers développent de nouvelles techniques de dissimulation. Des champs de bataille de la Grande Guerre au voyeurisme numérique, des soldats aux civils, les parties de cache-cache vont bon train.

Le nouvel âge du camouflage



De gauche à droite: «Facial Weaponization Suite» de Zach Blas; «Stealth Wear», capuche antidrone d'Adam Harvey; et la «WikiLeaks Scarf» de Metahaven.

PHOTOS
CHRISTOPHER
O'LEARY, ADAM
HARVEY, MEINKE
KLEIN

Par MARIE LECHNER

Disparaître. Se fondre dans l'environnement. Echapper à l'œil d'une technologie de plus en plus invasive. Le déploiement panoptique des technologies de surveillance réactive avec insistance cette problématique apparue sur le champ de bataille au début du siècle, élargie désormais à l'ensemble de la société civile. Comment se cacher des machines ? Comment devenir invisible dans une ère de plus en plus visuelle ? Dans son livre *Ni vu ni connu*, traduit récemment chez Zones sensibles (1), l'historienne Hanna Rose Shell trace une généalogie culturelle du camouflage, dont les développements sont étroitement liés à l'apparition de la photographie aérienne pendant la Première Guerre mondiale, lorsque le combat prend de la hauteur et que se dérober aux regards adverses devient une question de vie ou de mort. L'enseignante chercheuse au MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) y décrit cette course-poursuite entre la sophistication grandissante de la reconnaissance aérienne et les techniques vouées à la contrer. Aujourd'hui, ce petit jeu du chat et de la souris se poursuit plus que jamais avec l'arrivée des drones, la prolifération des caméras de surveillance, la biométrie, les systèmes de reconnaissance faciale et la traçabilité généralisée, à leur tour déjoués par de nouvelles contre-mesures.

Face à cette injonction contemporaine de visibilité, consécutive au 11 Septembre et à sa traque des ennemis sans visage, des stratégies de résistance surgissent un peu partout. Les figures disparaissent derrière les masques, comme moyen de protection ancestral ou refus carnavalesque de la détection. Celui collectif et grimaçant de Guy Fawkes, adopté par les légions d'Anonymous et de manifestants à travers le monde, les cagoules fluos des Pussy Riots, ou les capuches des Black Blocs. Les artistes ont joué un rôle primordial

Si la dissimulation stratégique est aussi vieille que le cheval de Troie, Hanna Rose Shell rappelle qu'il faut attendre le XX^e siècle et l'apparition de l'appareil-photo pour que ces pratiques de camouflage soient institutionnalisées et systématisées.

dans le développement des techniques de camouflage au XX^e siècle, depuis les peintres cubistes sollicités par l'armée française lors de la Grande Guerre jusqu'aux designers, stylistes et dessinateurs américains chargés de duper l'armée de Hitler avec des trompe-l'œil sophistiqués dès 1944. Désormais, les artistes montent au front pour dénoncer la surveillance et procurer les moyens de s'y soustraire.

«Nos identités instables aspirent au retour du masque», estime Bogomir Doringer, le commissaire de l'exposition «Faceless» qui s'est tenue à Vienne puis à Ams-

terdam au printemps, et explorait cette tendance lourde à cacher, brouiller ou recouvrir les visages dans les arts, la mode et les médias, observant que «ce masque, aujourd'hui, est numérique». A mesure que le besoin de camouflage social se fait plus pressant, il devient plus esthétisé, stylisé.

Parmi les projets critiques, «Facial Weaponization Suite» de Zach Blas consiste à créer, lors d'ateliers,

des masques en plastique 3D modelés d'après les données faciales agrégées de tous les participants. Le résultat évoque une sorte de face collective, globuleuse et informe, une figure inhumaine et paranoïaque, illisible par les algorithmes, qui a pour vocation d'interpeller le public sur les dérives de la biométrie et de fournir un abri anti-yeux numériques.

A Chicago, où 25 000 caméras sont raccordées en réseau à un unique centre de reconnaissance faciale, l'artiste Leo Selvaggio prête (ou plutôt vend à prix coûtant) son propre visage,

sous la forme d'un masque en résine hyperréaliste, à quiconque veut se promener incognito, dans son projet «URME Surveillance» (pour «U R Me», «tu es moi»). Le masque, garantit son auteur, est capable de leurrer les sophistiqués algorithmes de reconnaissance de Facebook ou d'applications, comme la controversée NameTag qui permet, à partir d'une simple photo prise avec un smartphone, de connaître l'identité numérique d'un anonyme croisé dans la rue.

Largement médiatisé, le projet de l'artiste new-yorkais Adam Harvey, «CV Dazzle», propose un guide

Les artistes du futur

TEXTE ETAÏNN ZWER

Chaque trimestre, *Usbek & Rica* ouvre ses pages aux projets artistiques les plus audacieux sur le plan prospectif. Cette fois-ci : leçon de camouflage avec les artistes américains Adam Harvey et Emma Dorothy Conley, qui développent d'ingénieuses tactiques de « data guérilla » pour protéger notre vie privée et se soustraire à la surveillance techno-numérique et microbiologique généralisée.



© Adam Harvey

« Think Privacy » La propagande anti-Big (Data) Brother

de l'artiste américain
Adam Harvey

Retrouvez les œuvres d'Adam Harvey à l'occasion de l'exposition « Extra fantômes. Les vrais, les faux, l'incertain » (du 7 avril au 31 juillet 2016 à la Gaîté lyrique, Paris), qui explore l'image de la maison hantée à travers le prisme de la culture numérique, la façon dont celle-ci nous connecte à l'im palpable, et nos tentatives pour devenir des fantômes aux yeux des machines.

Marqué par le tournant sécuritaire de l'Amérique post-11 Septembre, le travail d'Adam Harvey questionne notre droit à l'anonymat dans un monde obsédé par la transparence, où chacun de nos gestes est traqué et tracé pour nourrir les bases de données des gouvernements et des sociétés commerciales. Smartphones, réseaux sociaux, caméras, drones... Face aux algorithmes « paparazzi », l'artiste invente des stratégies de contre-surveillance, souvent inspirées de l'art de la guerre. « CV Dazzle », guide pratique de « glamourage » disruptif, brouillait maquillages et coiffures pour déjouer les systèmes de reconnaissance faciale. En écho au costume

brouillé du roman *Substance Mort* de Philip K. Dick, « Stealth Wear » propose une ligne de vêtements « furtifs » (capuche, burqa, hijab) dont les textiles parent les capteurs des drones, rendant la personne qui les porte invisible. Avec « Think Privacy » (2015), l'artiste joue les communicants et lance une campagne de sensibilisation déclinée en affiches au design épuré et aux slogans provocateurs : « Metadata Kills », « FUCK MY LIKE. Big Data knows more about my life than I do » (sur un fond bleu Facebook), « DATA NEVER DIES. You only live once but Data is forever », « TODAY'S SELFIE IS TOMORROW'S BIOMETRIC PROFILE »...

Une propagande détournée qui incite les utilisateurs citoyens à reprendre le contrôle de leurs données et de leur vie privée. En vente sur son site Private Gift Shop ou dans le cadre de pop-up stores au sein de musées, de New York à Hong Kong, les œuvres d'Adam Harvey raviront les cypherpunks et autres aficionados de la cryptographie. À la fois politiques et ludiques, elles appellent à résister à notre culture technomilitarisée intrusive. Au risque de voir advenir le scénario de *survival* qui les hante et dans lequel, face aux États voyeurs, il nous faudra bientôt sauver, littéralement peut-être, notre peau.



© Emma Dorothy Conley

« The Microbiome Security Agency » Devenez biononymous

de l'artiste et designer américaine Emma Dorothy Conley

Nos traces numériques révèlent qui nous sommes et comment nous vivons. Mais si ces *metadata* ne disent pas tout, nos données biologiques, elles, racontent notre histoire de façon bien plus intime. Et si on venait à ficher ces informations ? Et si la police criminelle, les assurances et les agences scientifiques avaient recours au crowdfunding pour constituer de minutieuses bases de données clinico-biologiques ? C'est l'hypothèse qu'explore l'artiste et designer Emma Dorothy Conley. Inspiré par le travail de sa consœur Heather Dewey-Hagborg, son projet « The Microbiome Security Agency » (2015) s'empare des récentes recherches sur

le microbiome humain pour imaginer le futur de notre vie privée. Notre corps héberge des milliards de bactéries, notamment dans l'intestin, qui réagissent à notre environnement et influent sur notre santé. Cette population de micro-organismes est unique, comme notre matériel génétique : elle nous rend identifiables. Pour l'artiste, ces données vivantes doivent donc être protégées. Via des « AOMs », distributeurs ovnis nichés dans la ville, elle collecte des échantillons riches en bactéries, déposés incognito – résidus humains, déjections animales et végétaux –, qui nourrissent une « banque communautaire de bactéries ». L'artiste mixe le tout, puis séquence

et amplifie l'ADN de ce cocktail pour en tirer une « solution obscurcissante » qui, appliquée en gel, en spray ou en poudre sur la peau, recouvre votre composition bactérienne sans l'affecter. Plus il y a de dons et plus la solution devient hybride, créant un microbiome fantôme et non identifiable, c'est-à-dire « bio-anonyme ». La bataille autour de nos données personnelles est déjà engagée, rappelle cette fable d'anticipation ultréaliste. C'est donc à chacun d'élaborer les outils d'une vigilance collective et collaborative. Et si le futur était d'abord une question d'empowerment citoyen ?

le nostre facce da shopping catturate dai manichini

EDOARDO MALVENUTI

■ Ti vedo. Da questo punto di osservazione remoto, l'occhio della telecamera legge con precisione algebrica: chi sei ce l'hai scritto in faccia e un software di riconoscimento facciale può rivelarlo in pochi secondi. Questa tecnologia di intelligenza artificiale, favoleggiata dalla fantascienza, è ormai una realtà funzionante e diffusa, anzitutto in materia di sicurezza civile e militare, impiegata in diversi Paesi dalle forze dell'ordine per la video sorveglianza di edifici e spazi pubblici. Tuttavia il riconoscimento digitale del volto umano trova sempre più applicazioni in un settore più profano e

È il tentativo dei negozi fisici di tenere testa a quelli online, il mondo materiale che insegue quello virtuale

prossimo, quello dello shopping. Sono ormai diverse le aziende che pongono strumenti per il riconoscimento biometrico dei clienti all'interno di boutique e grandi magazzini; tra queste le maggiori sono il gigante giapponese Nec, la californiana Face First e 3VR, con sede a San Francisco.

Tutte offrono software che sono in grado, a seconda delle installazioni e delle necessità, di identificare clienti indesiderati, registrare i comportamenti di fronte ai prodotti in esposizione e fare statistiche sull'età, il sesso e la razza di chi passeggiava tra scaffali e manichini. L'obiettivo è doppio e semplice: «Minimizzare le perdite e ottimizzare le vendite», ha riferito pragmatico Al Shipp, amministratore delegato di 3VR, in un'intervista al quotidiano inglese *The Guardian*. Queste statistiche servono al gestore dello store per pensare nuove disposizioni dei prodotti, realizzare un marketing mirato, oppure puntare su campagne promozionali ricalcate su orari di frequentazione privilegiati. Spesso le catene sono reticenti a rivelare l'utilizzo di questi sistemi ma un sondaggio del settembre 2015 effettuato dalla Computer Services Corporation, gruppo mondiale che fornisce servizi di tecnologia dell'informazione, rivela che nel Regno Unito, su un campione di 150 negozi, il 27% utilizza il riconoscimento facciale per monitorare la propria clientela.

Il principio base di questa intelligenza artificiale è associare un nome a un volto; tuttavia nella maggior parte dei casi, nell'utilizzo commerciale che se ne fa, si tratta di riconoscimenti anonimi e statistici. Ma l'orientamento è chiaro: servirsi di una tecnologia biometrica capace di riconoscerci all'ingresso di un negozio, rivelando presenze, abitudini, gusti, insomma tutto quanto caratterizza il nostro comportamento di clienti, informazioni che permetterebbero quasi di anticipare i desideri. Tutto questo, per esempio, appoggiandosi sul nostro smartphone. Per i negozi si tratta di tenere testa allo shopping online dove, attraverso le nostre tracce di navigazione, riveliamo tanto di gusti e desideri prossimi: così, quan-

Tecnologia | Sempre più catene e marchi sperimentano il riconoscimento meccanico dei volti per monitorare età, sesso, razza e gusti dei clienti. E adeguare l'offerta



ADAM HARVEY

SOCIALE

CAPTURE LA VIOLENZA

«Guardami». «If you can see domestic violence, we can stop it». Il volto tumefatto di una ragazza domina un grande schermo installato nel quartiere degli affari londinese di Canary Warf in occasione della Giornata internazionale della donna. È questa la prima campagna di sensibilizzazione tecno-artistica d'Inghilterra pensata per funzionare grazie al riconoscimento facciale dei suoi spettatori: quanto più tempo i passanti si fermano a guardare il tabellone digitale, tanto più i lividi e i

tagli sul volto della donna vittima di violenza si schiariscono, guariscono gradualmente, fino a svanire. L'iniziativa, nata dalla collaborazione tra l'associazione Women's Aid e l'agenzia pubblicitaria Wcrs, investe per la prima volta questa nuova tecnologia per un'azione sociale. Non si tratta né di sorveglianza, né di statistiche commerciali: in questo caso l'occhio della telecamera è aperto sul pubblico, ma solo per chiedere attenzione. Il rapporto con lo schermo è emotivo, umano: un volto digitale che «si anima» guardandolo. Impossibile, come invita lo slogan, fare finta di niente.

INVISIBILITÀ Uno dei look creati dall'artista Adam Harvey nel suo progetto *computer vision dazzle*, in cui usa make up e parrucche strambe per ingannare il riconoscimento facciale

do il mondo materiale rincorre quello virtuale la logica binaria del riconoscimento facciale si rivela uno strumento prezioso.

Nel film *Minority Report* il personaggio interpretato da Tom Cruise attraversa la hall di un centro commerciale dove le telecamere, leggendo l'iride del suo occhio, lo riconosco-

nno bombardandolo di spot personalizzati mentre ologrammi pubblicitari lo chiamano per nome. Allucinazione di consumismo 2.0 o futuro prossimo? Per il momento la privacy del cliente, almeno in Europa e Stati Uniti, tiene testa alla tecnologia. «L'Eyeseeanneerquin ha installata nell'occhio una telecamera funzionante con un sistema di riconoscimento facciale: il software raccoglie dati sull'ora e la data del passaggio della persona, la fascia di età, il sesso, il gruppo etnico e il tempo di attenzione. Il tutto resta nell'anonimato statistico e nel rispetto della privacy del cliente», spiega a pagina99 Massimiliano Catanese, amministratore dele-

gato di Almax, azienda italiana leader nella manifattura di manichini, che lavora con grandi marchi in Italia, Francia, Stati Uniti, Canada e Cina. Il programma di riconoscimento è stato messo a punto grazie a una collaborazione dell'azienda con il Politecnico di Milano. Questo manichino ad alto contenuto tecnologico ha avuto un importante successo commerciale e un'eco mediatica forte, specie negli Stati Uniti. «Il manichino fornisce dati sotto forma di un documento excel, nel completo anonimato, tuttavia sarebbe possibile fare in modo che la macchina associa un nome a un volto, che "riconosca" chi gli sta davanti». Spesso si fa con i commessi perché non sporchino le statistiche con i loro andirivieni, ma ci sono Paesi dove la legislazione in materia è lasca o mancante: «In Cina ad esempio non ci sono problemi a riconoscere le persone, ma in molti altri Paesi la legge non lo permette».

Il nostro farci riconoscere non serve solo ad aziende e grandi magazzini, la faccia ben presto ce la metteremo di nostra spontanea volontà, per finalizzare gli acquisti. Al Mobile World Congress 2016 di Barcellona il gigante delle carte di credito Mastercard ha svelato l'ultima novità in termini di pagamenti in linea: il pay selfie. Un servizio, già testato con successo negli Stati Uniti e in Olanda, che permette di effettuare dei pagamenti in linea semplicemente scattandosi un autoritratto con lo smartphone. Per effettuare il pay selfie sarà necessario installare un'applicazione Mastercard ed effettuare un test di vitalità sbattendo le palpebre per attivare la camera. Questa tecnologia biometrica di pagamento dovrebbe essere disponibile già dalla prossima estate in diversi paesi europei e americani, tra cui Italia, Francia e Stati Uniti.

Ma se la pratica del volto come traccia contabile o carta di credito è il credo di oggi, e possibilmente l'ortodossia di domani, negli Usa c'è già un artista, Adam Harvey, che sta esplorando tecniche di «invisibilità» al riconoscimento meccanico: grazie a parrucche e make-up del viso chiamate *computer vision dazzle* - abbigliamento per l'occhio computerizzato - la nostra faccia è resa irriconoscibile all'algoritmo di un software di riconoscimento facciale. I look repertoriati sul sito di Harvey sono un po' pazzoidi: sincerismo bizzarro di capigliature futuriste e trucchi tribali. Un escamotage capace di farci scomparire dalle telecamere, ma che non ci farà certo passare inosservati.

Presto arriveranno anche qui i pay selfie: pagheremo i nostri acquisti scattandoci una foto con lo smartphone

nibile già dalla prossima estate in diversi paesi europei e americani, tra cui Italia, Francia e Stati Uniti.

About Zoo Galerie

Zoo galerie is an independent art space, established in 1989 in Nantes, located in an ancient factory next to the Loire river since 1998. After its foundation by a collective of artists, journalists, architects, art professors and students, it has been run by Patrice Joly from 1995, this latter then joined by Aude Launay in 2005. Mostly dedicated to the first solo shows of emerging artists, Zoo galerie is also the publisher of art books and of the quarterly art review *O2*. (www.zerodeux.fr)

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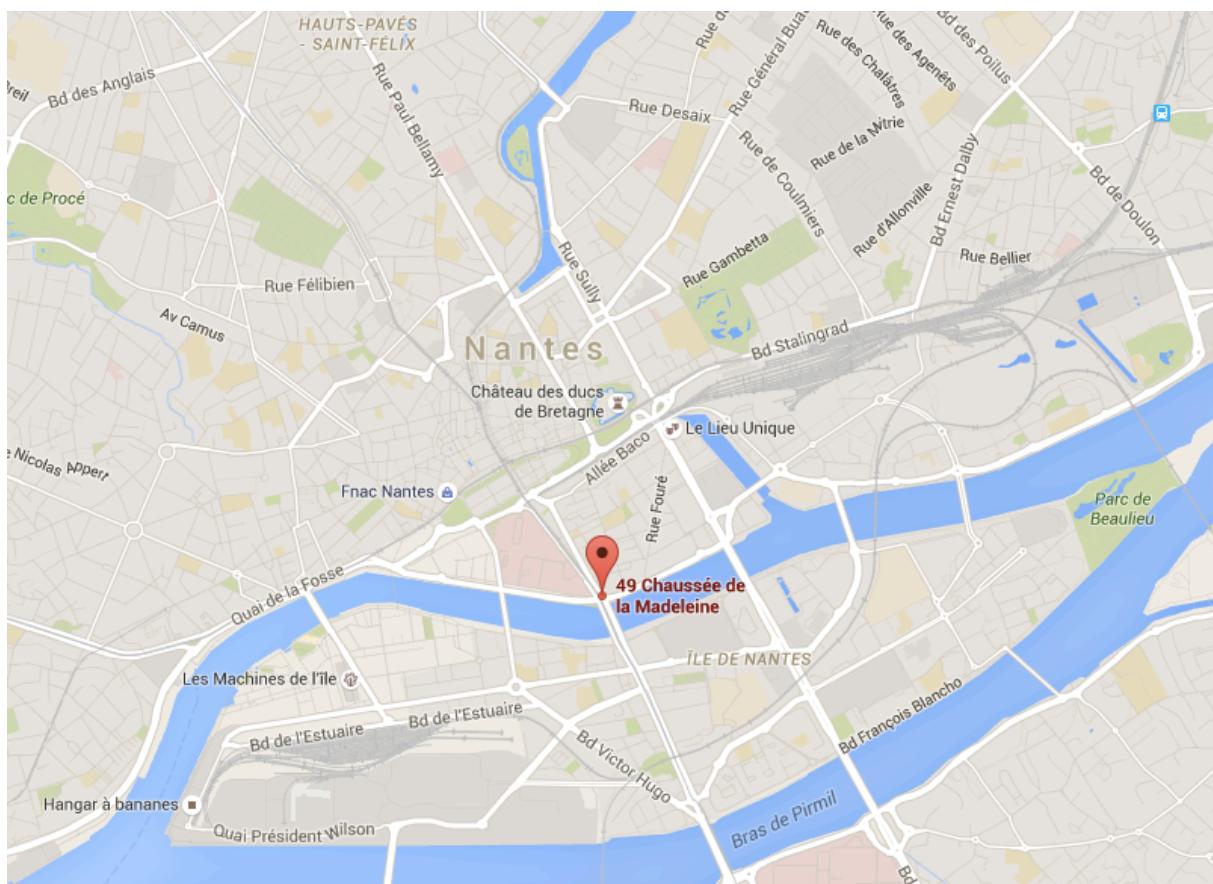
How to get there:

By train : From Paris, [trains run about every hour], it is a 2h10 ride.

By plane : From London or Basel, notably, there are direct flights.

Zoo galerie
49 chaussée de la Madeleine
44000 Nantes
France

Tramway 2, stop at Aimé Delrue. The tram stop just faces the entrance of Zoo galerie.



www.zoogalerie.fr

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